THE LARGER PARISH

A MOVEMENT OR AN ENTHUSIASM?

By

EDMUND DES. BRUNNER

NEW YORK

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS RESEARCH

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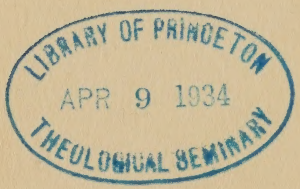

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Institute of Social and Religious Research

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EDMUND DES. BRUNNER

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By
EDMUND DES. BRUNNER

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INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS RESEARCH

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The following comprised the staff of the study in addition to the director: Elizabeth Hooker, Helena Dickinson and W. Rudolf F. Stier, field workers; Rhoda Lawrence, secretary-statistician, and Edmund deS. Brunner, Jr., statistician.

INTRODUCTION

THE "larger parish," though a comparatively new term in the literature of the rural church, is now firmly established in the vocabulary of rural church executives and of others interested in this field, and several hundred larger parishes have been organized. It has become increasingly evident, however, that definitions, programs and administrative procedures of these larger parishes differ radically, and numerous suggestions have been made that the movement should be studied by the Institute of Social and Religious Research. The results of the study finally undertaken are presented in this pamphlet.

The investigation included data from several sources. The abundant promotional and descriptive literature of the movement was examined. About a dozen masters' dissertations in half as many institutions were consulted, which had studied particular phases of larger parish activity or the larger parishes of particular denominations. National, state and district denominational executives were consulted through interviews and correspondence. From all these sources 197 so-called larger parishes were discovered, to which questionnaires were mailed. Despite every effort no more larger parishes could be found, although a few denominational executives estimated the number of such parishes in existence at 400. Replies were received from 117. Of these, thirty-three, or 28.2 per cent of those replying, had failed and were no longer functioning as larger parishes. Of the remaining eighty-four,[1] field studies were made of twenty-

[1] The denominational distribution of these was as follows:

Region	Methodist	Congregational	Interdenominational	Presbyterian	Baptist	Total
Total	27	19	18	16*	4	84
New England	3	4	5	0	0	12
Middle Atlantic	4	0	6	3	1	14
South	2	2	0	7	0	11
Middle West	11	6	5	5	3	30
Mountain	5	2	1	1	0	9
Far West	2	5	1	0	0	8

* Several Presbyterian parishes insisted that they were demonstration, not larger parishes. (See chapter i.)

nine larger parishes, of half a dozen that had failed and of two border-line cases. In addition, the records of the Institute yielded data about some larger parishes that happened to have been included in its former studies. Finally, the directors of thirty-eight of the remaining parishes kindly filled out schedule forms for their enterprises identical with those used in the field work.

The data so gathered are here presented. The report opens with the history of the larger parish movement and a discussion of how such parishes may be defined. The denominational and internal organization of larger parishes is next discussed, and then attention turns to the parishes surveyed, their communities and the service rendered to them, and their constituencies. Finally, the advantages, achievements, problems and failures of the movement are appraised.

An anticipatory word as to the conclusions reached may be given here. Attention has already been called to the swollen estimates of some of the less realistic of the denominational executives, and it is certain that the present extent and influence of the larger parish movement have been exaggerated. There are more speeches made and pamphlets written about larger parishes than there are larger parishes themselves. Some of the enterprises are not readily distinguishable from the old-fashioned circuit. On the other hand, there are some excellent pieces of work operating as larger parishes, deserving of praise, encouragement and emulation. If it is true that this study reviews an enthusiasm rather than a movement, nevertheless it should be remembered that it is out of such enthusiasms that movements grow.

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Chapter I

HISTORY AND DEFINITION

The question as to what a larger parish really is cannot be answered without first taking a brief glance at the history of the movement. In such an historical approach one may well pass by the prototypes of the modern larger parish, such as the medieval parish in England which, covering a definite area of land, combined many secular and social functions with its religious activities; the ministry of the Moravian Church in the Middle Atlantic states in the eighteenth century, and certain Roman Catholic projects and techniques, especially in Europe. For these, similar as they are in some respects, seem to have had no discoverable influence on the modern movement.

Antecedent Conditions

The present larger parish movement arose in large part as a result of social conditions in rural America. With the coming of the automobile, the old rural neighborhood began to change its functions, and rural communities centered more and more in villages and towns.[1] The church adjusted itself slowly to this situation, especially near the centers. Many open-country churches were abandoned or weakened as people migrated, or as families joined churches in the center.[2] One answer to the problems created was the community or united churches of various types previously studied by the Institute of Social and Religious Research;[3] another answer was the increasing emphasis on "the social gospel," and a third was the larger parish movement which is the special subject of this report.

Motivating these attempts to answer the problem of the rural church were other factors concerned with new attitudes that arose with the changing conditions briefly alluded to above. There came a new spirit

[1] Cf. Brunner and Kolb, *Rural Social Trends* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1933), chapter iv.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, chapter viii.

[3] Cf. Hooker, *United Churches* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1926).

of coöperation among similar denominations, a conviction on the part of some, at least, that to meet spiritual needs was more important than to save institutions. At the same time, a few, at any rate, of the church leaders began to understand the important influence of economic and social phenomena upon such an institution as the church, and the tools and techniques of social science were called into service in an effort to determine adequate programs and procedures for churches. As a natural consequence there arose a willingness to utilize to some degree the services of the expert and, in a local situation, of the specially trained individual. Without these things the larger parish movement would not have come about, and it is against the background of these considerations that the history of the movement must be viewed.

Origin of the Larger Parish Movement

It may perhaps never be determined who originated and conducted the first larger parish of any of the present recognized types of rural church work so described. There is, however, no doubt as to who originated the term. It was coined by the Rev. Harlow S. Mills to describe his program at Benzonia, Michigan, and appears in his book, *The Making of a Country Parish,* published by the Missionary Education Movement in 1914.

Three years prior to that time Mr. Mills began to cultivate the area around his village. He discovered it to be largely unserved by the ministries of religion and began a systematic and sympathetic extension of the work of his church through various accepted channels of service, chiefly evangelism, religious education and some community service. The people responded beyond all expectation, and in a relatively short time Mr. Mills needed first one and then another and another assistant. In time, another church was added. At the peak the Benzonia parish was reaching nearly one-third of the families in its area, had 600 children in Sunday school and was sponsoring neighborhood clubs for adults and athletic and other organizations for young people. The community had a population of 2,500. Mr. Mills' book describing this work exerted a profound influence, although the work itself has unfortunately long since lapsed.

The country church movement was in embryonic form in those days, and Mr. Mills, sincerely believing that he had originated the idea, was apparently quite unaware of closely similar enterprises going on elsewhere. Among these was that of Dr. Silas Parsons, of Cazenovia, New York. Early in the 1900's he discovered that on one road leading to his

town the number of families coming to his church had dropped from twenty to three. He proceeded to find out why this situation had arisen and how to remedy it. Like Mr. Mills, he carried on intensive pastoral visitation, preached in schoolhouses and gradually made his parish coterminus with the trade area of his town. He discovered unmet social, as well as spiritual, needs and developed a far-flung social program. This enterprise was described in one of the first pamphlet publications of the County Church Department of the Presbyterian Board of National Missions, Dr. Warren H. Wilson, director, and has also been reported at length in Dr. Wilson's book, *The Church at the Center.*[4]

Another venture was the community parish developed by the Rev. Clair W. Adams at Bement, Illinois. He ministered to six outstations which were really federated churches.[5] The work began in 1905 and lasted until 1912. During the last four years he had a woman worker. These federations touched every phase of country life: social, religious, educational, recreative. They had agricultural classes, women's clubs, mission societies, baseball teams, picnics, and many other wholesome activities.

At Buckhorn, Kentucky, is a well-known mission station which is now ministering to a large outlying community. The Rev. Harvey S. Murdoch, who was stated supply of the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York, in 1900, went to Kentucky in 1903. After surveying the situation there, he decided upon Buckhorn as a location. When his home church in New York heard his report, they decided to back him in this venture. By 1907 he became pastor-evangelist there, and in 1908 he had a helper, John I. Williams, a teacher, who began a school that has since become a large institution for elementary and high-school work. Now the mission has grown into an institution with a hospital, orphanage and school in connection with the church.[6]

Dr. Warren H. Wilson, the recognized and honored dean of country church leaders in the United States for almost a quarter of a century, early in his work adapted the principles of these experiments, namely ministry to all the people of an area by a specialized staff, to a considerable group of churches assigned to him by presbyteries for administration. Taking over a term from the early work of the Extension Service of the

[4] (New York: Missionary Education Movement, 1915). See pp. 82 ff.

[5] Cowan, John F., *Big Jobs for Little Churches* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1917), p. 149.

[6] Brunner, *Churches of Distinction* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1923), chapter ix.

United States Department of Agriculture, he called these "demonstration parishes." Many of them are still functioning. At that time Dr. Wilson was the only country church executive in any of the major religious bodies, and to him turned for freely given help scores of those interested in the country church in all denominations. These demonstration parishes, therefore, and the philosophy behind them were of great influence.

But just as farmers watching government-supervised farm demonstrations often scorned the results because "anyone can succeed with the government behind him," so some churchmen held that anyone could demonstrate with the national board behind him. For this and other reasons the Congregational Country Church Department, Dr. Malcolm Dana, director, early in its life, which began in 1920, adopted the term "larger parishes" for the type of work it chiefly promoted. The term has now been adopted by most of the denominations and a considerable literature has grown up around it. Dr. Dana developed, as his work proceeded, a rather common form of constitution for larger parishes and produced two extended pamphlets on larger parish theory and practice that have been very influential.

Definitions

This brief sketch of the background of the larger parish movement leads to the problem of defining what is meant by the term. The need of serving the larger social units that were developing in rural America, which called forth the enterprises described and others like them, naturally led to expressions of ideals and descriptions of procedure. To many of these procedures the term larger parish was given.

Dr. Dana thus defines the larger parish:

> "A. The generally admitted essentials of a best larger parish are these:
>
> "(a) A definitely selected area of land containing a population and churches sufficient to support two or more leaders who assume joint responsibility for a common and unified program.
>
> "(b) A combining of financial and other resources by communities, neighborhoods and churches to secure coöperatively a ministry, program and equipment such as no one of them could secure alone and unaided.
>
> "(c) A Larger Parish Council, regularly organized and meeting at stated intervals, composed of one or more delegates officially elected by each of the coöperating units, which formulates a program, agrees upon a budget, and becomes the executive agency.
>
> "(d) A multiple ministry or staff of trained specialists who coöperate in

a departmentalized work designed to secure equal social, economic, religious and other privileges for every person living in centers or open country within the larger parish area.

"(e) A common feeling of responsibility for and loyalty to an area of land and all people living thereon.

"The above rather elaborate larger parish may be

a. *Interdenominational*—churches of different denominations uniting to promote and support a common program by means of a Larger Parish Council and staff of workers (as above defined) but preserving their own identities, keeping up their own properties, and supporting their own denominational budgets and benevolences; or

b. *Denominational*—churches of one denomination promoting and supporting their own denominational program (by the above means) irrespective of what other churches may be doing within the same area.

"B. A less effective but also less expensive larger parish may include all of the features of coöperation outlined in A. A difference will be that one minister presides over it who discovers, trains and uses local leadership instead of the more efficient paid specialists."

Dr. Wilson's definition is:

"It is the ministry to all who live on an area of land about a center, the land bounded by a periphery of radius not longer than a convenient neighborly driving; the whole population to be included in the service rendered; interdenominational obligations explicitly organized; community council if needed; diversified functional ministry organized under a leader; a community program organized to satisfy, so far as necessary, health, educational, economic and recreational needs; the worship of God always a supreme objective."

Somewhat different thinking in regard to the larger parish is shown by another set of definitions. Dr. M. A. Dawber, of the Rural Department of the Methodist Episcopal Board of Home Missions and Church Erection, for instance, states:

"The Larger Parish is based upon the idea of several churches under comprehensive and coöperative leadership. Instead of two or three churches on a circuit with an untrained pastor struggling alone, the plan seeks to group several churches under a combined ministry that will be trained to meet the varying needs of all the people in a given territory. A minimum of leadership would be: first, a supervision preacher-pastor who will be responsible for the general program; second, a man who in addition to preaching will care for the young men's and boys' work for the entire field; third, a woman who will have charge of the program of religious education, together with the girls' and children's work. Such a group working together can render service to a

larger number of people with a broader program, eliminating duplication, and providing vital elements of a Christian program which are frequently omitted under the present system."

A conference on larger parishes held by Dr. Dawber's organization arrived at this pronouncement:

"A Larger Parish is a group of churches coöperating together in a common program. It provides an organization and a technique, and may be viewed as an agency for fostering unified church organization and achievement. In principle, the Larger Parish is a piece of organizational machinery developed for the purpose of uniting small and ineffective church units in a common effort to secure more and better leadership, guidance, and development than the small church can achieve unaided and alone. As a technique, it is a method of unifying more or less homogeneous small church units which are handicapped by lack of vision, leadership, and means. As an agency, it groups churches together for a definite program of work, and according to possibilities of organization and procedure dictated by local conditions. It makes possible a program suited to the needs of the small church and of the coöperating group of churches."

It will be noted that the stress here is upon technique and organization, and to some church executives this is all the larger parish is. Thus the Rev. C. C. Haun calls it "a method of rural church administration" and expounds on the mechanics of organization.

Of late, efforts have been made to combine these two points of view. The Rev. E. E. Sundt, until recently rural director of the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, says:

"I would define a Larger Parish as a 'religious coöperative' designed to minister to all the needs of all the people within a specified area." [7]

A typical attempt by a practical state administrator to define the larger parish in broad rather than administrative terms, is that by the Rev. Robert C. Armstrong:

[7] The unqualified use of the term "all the needs" in this definition, frequently explicit or implied in many of the letters received from denominational executives, national and state, is interesting. It indicates a point of view that at recurrent intervals has been the hope of many church leaders. It is a hope sociologically and in many other ways impossible of fulfillment. It is only in rare instances that organized religion conducts church, school, hospital, industry and some trade. The fact that such churches can do this under highly exceptional conditions demonstrates nothing for the generality of all rural communities. Society permits and expects community service of the rural church. It does not desire and will not permit that it serve all the social needs of the average community, even in the unlikely event that competition among the several churches in the community were nonexistent. In those happy situations where it is, the church obviously can do more than elsewhere.

"My conception of the larger parish is that it is composed of a number of preaching points united together into one general organization for the purpose of providing an adequate ministry for that particular area. This may or may not involve more than one pastor, but it will usually include three or more preaching points, or service points, and involve a much larger population than the ordinary single parish."

In 1930 a Larger Parish Conference, held in the Enfield Falls Larger Parish in New York, "tried to build a satisfactory definition" and "after much discussion" arrived at: "The Larger Parish is a specialized group ministry of a group of churches for an inclusive area." The report adds, however, "Some felt that no fixed definition could be formulated." This definition, so far as definition goes, comes closer than others to combining the concept of ministry to all the people of an area by one organization with the essentially interchurch concept of group ministry for a group of churches.

In practice, however, each larger parish is its own definition of the term. The results of this study show that there are almost as many variations in practice, and to a large extent in organization, as there are projects called larger parishes. This is also the conclusion of Professor A. Z. Mann, of the Springfield Y. M. C. A. College, who, while at Garrett Biblical Institute, gave much attention to the subject of larger parishes. He has well stated that there is no such thing as "the" larger parish plan.

But that fact has not minimized interest in the subject and the plan. As stated in the introduction, the term and the ideas associated with it have captured the imagination of the rural religious world.

Discussions of it appear on the programs of many religious conferences. Theological seminaries are using students to study aspects of the larger parish and its problems [8] and a few have courses on larger parish organization and program. Two national conferences of larger parish workers have been held under Methodist auspices and several covering smaller areas have been conducted. A number of national religious agencies have approved the plan, sometimes boards, sometimes official gatherings of bishops or district superintendents, sometimes the highest judicatory of the denomination, as when, in 1932, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. approved the promotion of the larger parish plan throughout that denomination.

[8] In this respect Professor A. Z. Mann at Garrett was a pioneer, although Professor Felton at Drew University, Dr. Wilson at Union Theological Seminary, and Dr. Dana at Yale, and others have also stimulated valuable studies used chiefly as masters' theses.

This great interest coupled with the "much discussion" over definition, is an indication of the newness of the movement, of the sense of urgency in meeting rural church problems and of the hope which the larger parish idea aroused.

The better to understand and evaluate the results of the survey which appear in later chapters, it is important to describe the various types of enterprises that have been listed by the reporting denominational organizations as larger parishes. It should be noted that this listing of types is in terms of categories used by those interested. It is not a logical nor a consistent list. It is valuable as revealing the type of thinking about the term, the sorts of plans that for one reason or another it seems advantageous to those interested to think of as "larger parishes."

Types of Larger Parishes

THE DEMONSTRATION PARISH

The "Demonstration Parish," already mentioned and described, was one of the earliest forms of larger parishes in the sense that its organization and program were closely similar to the larger parish as originally constituted. These demonstrations involved ministry to those living on an area of land by a unified staff of several pastors or religious workers, each with a specialized function and all working under common direction. In the Presbyterian Church, which originated the demonstration parish, many of which demonstrations are now definitely known as larger parishes, there is also recognition of parishes containing only one center of work and only one full-time employed worker, who, however, organizes and utilizes volunteers for the usual lines of activity. Other bodies are also coming to this point of view.

MULTIPLE-STAFF TYPE

A second type described in the larger parish literature is the Multiple Ministry Parish. This, in effect, is what Mr. Mills had at Benzonia. The staff consists of two or more persons, each responsible for a department of work, such as religious education, throughout the whole parish area. The size, efficiency and breadth of program of such parishes are often the result of long periods of development, although sometimes they are brought about by home-mission aid.

The difference between the multiple-staff type and the demonstration

parish is almost entirely administrative. In the case of the latter the centers were selected as demonstrations and were definitely associated with national headquarters. In the former, the demonstration motive and national supervision is theoretically absent, although the use made of such parishes in promotional literature and speaking indicates clearly that they are also demonstrations. Sociologically they appear identical.

ONE-MAN TYPE

The third type has also been called the Neighborhood or One-man Larger Parish. In effect it was described above as a variant of the demonstration parish. It depends on volunteer leadership for all departments, but is directed by an ordained and employed person.

YOKED FIELD TYPE

A fourth type of work called a larger parish is described by Dr. Dana's term, "Yoked Field." It seems hardly to qualify as a larger parish. It is simply a modern term to sugar-coat or conceal the use of the outmoded circuit system. The minister takes one or more preaching appointments. His services are largely the "vocal ministry of the circuit rider." A real program is seldom considered.

TOWN-CITY LARGER PARISH

A fifth type is known as the Town or City-centered Parish. The 1932 Methodist Larger Parish Conference thus described it:

"The town or city-centered type generally operates outward from a strong town or city church, which feels a responsibility for the adjacent territory, usually consisting of several small churches with inadequate leadership and resources."

THE ASSOCIATION TYPE

The sixth type is called by some the Association Type. It is described by the same conference as follows:

"In many situations, where the interests of people are not centralized in a given area, but where there is need for united effort, ministers and churches of more or less equal strength associate themselves in the building of a program of activities which will strengthen all of the churches and communities. In such a plan the ministers, in addition to serving their local parishes, are associated in a staff ministry to the entire area, each specializing in some activity as, evangelism, religious education, young people's work, men's and boys' work, etc."

This plan has the advantage of being adaptable to changing needs, areas and leadership; it is not antithetic to the preceding types. It is used more largely by the Methodist denomination than by others, but is also employed interdenominationally.

COUNTY AND MISSION COMPOUND PARISHES

Many parishes of the Association Type and a few of the others described work on a county basis and are sometimes called County Large Parishes, which is thus the seventh type. This type is frequently urged for small counties on the ground that increasingly such counties are becoming social units.

Finally there is the Mission Compound Type of larger parish represented by situations where the religious organization responsible has a very inclusive type of service. These are found chiefly in the southern mountains. One, Buckhorn, Kentucky, has been mentioned above. Such work almost always has antedated the use of the term larger parish.

Most of these types can be either denominationally or interdenominationally organized.

TWO MAIN TYPES

This variety of types can really be classified, just as can the definitions already given, under two main heads: the closely integrated type that ministers in many ways to all the people of a sociologically recognized area, and the type that groups churches together more or less loosely, regardless of sociological factors such as location in the same community or area, for the performance of certain functions more efficiently carried on jointly than separately. The first type has unified administration, covering all work, finance and so forth. The second type permits each coöperating church to retain its own organization, minister and funds, and simply to coöperate in such aspects of the program as appeal to each.

This raises the whole question of the organization of larger parishes which will be dealt with in the next chapter. Before turning to that subject, however, a further comment must be made.

When Is a Parish Larger?

A reading of the literature of the larger parish movement raises the question as to whether or not proponents of the larger parish idea have sought to magnify the size of the enterprise by counting as larger parishes

many pieces of work not so originated or planned. For instance, in 1922, the Institute of Social and Religious Research studied forty of the most successful town and country churches it could discover in the United States. Two of these were then larger parishes. In 1933 four more of these churches were known as larger parishes, although in no case had there been any change in organization, program or staff, and in two cases there was not even a local change of name.

There is a real question as to whether the associational type of larger parish organization should strictly be so called. A parish originally was the district committed to one pastor. It was the territory in which the members of a given church lived. So at least says Webster. There can be no question but that the term connotes a definite locality with inherent cohesion. The loose association of the churches of many localities for more efficient religious education does not meet this definition. On the other hand, the laws of language have no legal sanctions. Language grows functionally and those who use the term parish as broadly as some of the definitions and types listed above indicate, are seeking to put an enlarged meaning into an old term. And there is this pragmatic justification. The term parish is familiar to people. The idea "larger" parish appeals to the bigger and better philosophy of America. People will accept a "larger parish" organization. If the proposal for an association type of larger parish were more accurately termed as one for "interchurch coöperation" it might raise the many questions centering around the problems of bringing denominations into close working relations; it would be suspected as a covert move for church union. But a proposal for organizing something familiar like a parish on a larger basis arouses few, if any, sleeping suspicions.

Nevertheless, if the larger parish movement is to be built on a sound basis, the matter of definition is more important than it seems. A circuit of preaching points can be called a yoked field type of larger parish as a promotional device or a means of securing home-mission aid from a none too critical board, but it may lack every other characteristic of a larger parish save the name. Even a group of churches actively coöperating in a denominational program, commendable as that may be, if it lacks a sociologically homogeneous area in which a coördinated, intensive program of work is carried on by a competent staff, can be called a larger parish only by courtesy. To write a definition to include every case where the term larger parish is used will, in the long run, but increase the num-

ber of failures and bring the movement into discredit as a means of solving many of the problems of the rural church in the United States.

Such confusion in definitions, types, objectives and terms as has been indicated is to be expected in an enterprise as new as the larger parish movement. Indeed, it is inevitable. The newness of the movement has been emphasized, but how new it actually is can be easily seen in Table I, giving the year of organization of the parishes surveyed and of forty-nine others that answered this point on a mailed questionnaire. It will be noted that three out of five of these parishes had had five years or less of history and that eight out of nine had been organized within the last decade. Not much in the way of tradition or standardization can be expected under such conditions. Too much would be dangerous, but the time seems to be at hand when too little also has real dangers.

TABLE I—DATE OF ORGANIZATION OF LARGER PARISHES

Year	New England	Middle Atlantic	South	Middle West	Mountain	Far West
Total	12	13	11	27	8	8
Prior to 1920	—	—	4	1	—	—
1921	—	—	—	—	1	2
1922	—	—	—	1	—	—
1923	—	—	—	1	1	—
1924	—	—	1	—	1	—
1925	2	—	—	1	2	—
1926	1	—	—	2	—	—
1927	2	3	1	2	1	1
1928	2	—	2	3	1	2
1929	—	3	3	6	—	—
1930	2	3	—	2	1	1
1931	2	3	—	4	—	1
1932	1	1	—	4	—	1

Chapter II

ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The steps in the organization of a larger parish are not complicated. They are concerned not only with the administrative machinery but also with certain preliminary procedures that must needs be taken to insure a successful launching of the enterprise.

Preliminary Surveys

The first step in initiating several of the stronger larger parishes was a survey of the proposed area of service. The Methodist Larger Parish Conference calls this step indispensable. Some of these "surveys" were little more than friendly house-to-house visitations; others carried the inquiry into related social and economic matters and were fairly careful studies of the religious life and history of the area, so far as its institutions went. In this way, suggestions as to program, potential support in funds and in volunteer leadership, and hints as to the type of promotional campaign required and as to the sort of salaried leadership demanded for a given situation were secured.

Educational Campaign

Such a survey furnishes the data for an "educational campaign," during which the people of the selected area are exposed to the larger parish idea and its advantages in terms of the possibilities for meeting their religious needs. Because the larger parish idea is new and somewhat experimental, because it is an attempt to meet a new situation in the reorganization of rural social life in larger units, as yet themselves not perfectly formed or integrated, this educational campaign becomes of extreme importance. Although several denominational executives warn against superimposing an organization on an area and properly urge that the program must grow out of the recognized needs of the people, the results as studied lead to the suspicion that many of those in favor of the larger parish idea were ill supplied with data or too hurried in their educational

campaign, for in many of the failures one of the causes seemed to be an inadequate appreciation on the part of the members of what a larger parish was and could do. Some of the most successful larger parishes were inaugurated without any formal "campaign." The pastors in these places had served long and well enough to enjoy the confidence of their people, and gradually led them, sometimes over a period of several years, into the desire for and organization of a larger parish.

This point is worth stressing, because too often a denominational executive does form a larger parish by fiat. He sees a dozen of his churches in a county, some with resident pastors who must take on outside preaching appointments to eke out a living wage. He sees the rest of these churches served by non-residents, perhaps from outside the county. He decides on a reshuffle that will link the whole dozen up as a larger parish. He knows that this is a term much bruited about and that its use seems to make home-mission funds easier to obtain. With that fine disregard of sociological, economic and psychological considerations that characterizes one type of administrative mind, religious or secular, the executive holds a meeting and a larger parish is organized. To the reshuffled ministers, now become "a staff," is left the new parish to love, nurture and sustain.

This is not to say that many executives would not proceed with care, that they would not conscientiously seek the best men for the staff positions, that they would not make what they felt to be an adequate effort to educate the prospective constituency of the larger parish. If there were not some such administrations there would be few, if any, larger parishes for this survey to report upon.

But the first type is too common. It cannot help but hurt the larger parish movement by disappointing expectations. This type, too, may increase. Letters from many denominational executives stated, as among the advantages of the larger parish plan, that it "is a way of saving my weak churches."

Thus one denominational executive, in a body where such officials hold a good deal of authority, divided his area into twenty-eight larger parishes. These were launched in a whirlwind campaign with much local as well as national denominational publicity. There was no local demand for the change, no understanding of the scheme. One year after this executive's term of office expired, namely, at the time of this study, twenty-seven of these twenty-eight larger parishes had lapsed. These are not included in the failures mentioned in the introduction. The surviving

one, according to its pastor and to the new executive, operates no differently from an old-time circuit, although it retains the name. Other parishes seemed to be similar. Said one pastor, "We're called a Larger Parish. In reality, we are nothing but a miniature association." [1]

In this study a number of cases were found where denominational executives were definitely using the larger parish idea to strengthen weak denominational churches and as an excuse for withholding interdenominational comity or even coöperation after the larger parish had been organized. In other cases, churches of other denominations were invited to join the larger parish after its organization by one body. In no case of those studied was this invitation accepted. The only result was ill-will. The other churches were irritated because they had not been consulted from the first. The larger parish people were righteously aggrieved because their coöperative gesture was rebuffed. They resented the suspicion that they were sincerely uninterested in denominational advantage, a suspicion that was understandable and doubtless justified in some cases. One man said, "Frankly, we organized this parish to keep the —— denomination from getting the field. With a declining population, these points can't support two denominations. We don't propose to get out." So far as this study goes, such cases were found exclusively among the Baptists and Methodists. More attention will be given to this matter in chapter vi.

As is perhaps natural in promoting a new movement, a considerable minority of the larger parishes studied had been organized with the help of national denominational executives. Often they were invited in to advise on a difficult situation as a result of a platform presentation of the advantages of the larger parish plan in carrying on rural work. In many other cases the state or district officer was responsible, more often than not on his own initiative. More than one director stated: "We would never have had this larger parish but for the denominational executive." In one state an extension worker of the state college of agriculture had rendered help to a number of larger parishes. Barely one in eight of those studied had had an indigenous growth. The outside leadership was often continuing and wise. One pastor said, "The move to organize this larger parish was made by state officials. They called the people together. They sold the plan but they are constantly with us and thus we will overcome the tradition and inertia which would otherwise wreck the enterprise."

[1] "Association" is the name of the smallest ecclesiastical unit in this denomination.

The director of another and successful larger parish reported: "I worked with our people for eight months before the district superintendent was called in. He has given full coöperation ever since."

Indigenous Growth

In another situation in the "Range" states the organization of the larger parish was entirely indigenous. Local laymen heard of the idea. They came to believe that it offered a solution for the problem of religious ministry in an area of low density of population. They gathered together from the various localities laymen whom they felt might be interested. The pastor was a high-grade man and fell in with the plan. This parish has been working smoothly for four or five years.

In another locality, middle-western, the people saw that the gradual transfer of members of open-country churches to the village churches was making religious education increasingly difficult in the country. In consultation with national and district executives the larger parish plan was hit upon as a solution of this problem. The open-country adherents of the village church realized its value to the neighborhoods where they still lived, and a successful larger parish resulted.

Successful larger parishes have also inspired others in near-by communities, and the staff and members of several such parishes have given valuable service in organizing others, especially in New York State.

It appears quite clear from the results of this survey that overhead imposition of the larger parish organization is not very likely to produce the best results. There must be a convinced body of local opinion in favor of the plan, if the traditional loyalty of the people to a single institution symbolized in a building is to be transferred to a larger entity.

State Administrators Divided on Larger Parish Plan

It must not be supposed from the foregoing that the overhead administration of the denominations is unanimously in favor of the larger parish movement. Nationally, this is true. In the state or district units it is not. In one important middle-western state all the executives, when interviewed, declared they would have none of the larger parish movement. They averred that it took too much money for the results and was feasible only with large backing from national boards. In another state in this region one such executive was doing all in his power, over the desires of two larger parish directors and their members, to withdraw

support. He felt the appropriations made by the national board would do more good spent "in the usual way."

Another district superintendent insisted that two projects nominated for study by his national board of missions were not larger parishes. "The work the minister does outside his charge is entirely unauthorized," he said. The pastors insisted that, while the term was not locally used, their fields were in actuality larger parishes.[2]

These two illustrations are typical of others. A majority of the denominational officials interviewed, that were of less than national status, were skeptical of the larger parish plan. Some had tried it and seen it fail; others felt that it was "untried," "too expensive," "impracticable save in exceptional situations." A majority of the few who had tried the larger parish plan were committed to it. They felt that it was too new to have achieved general acceptance but would win its way. National executives were convinced that a proper administrative attitude was essential to the success of the average larger parish and that, given such an attitude, wise and continuing supervision was of paramount importance.

The attitude of administrators was more favorable to the larger parish plan in the New England states, in New York, Ohio, the intermountain states and the Pacific Coast than elsewhere.

Organization of Larger Parishes

LARGER PARISH COUNCILS

By whomever organized and however well or poorly, almost, although not all, larger parishes have a council. The national rural church leaders consider this feature to be indispensable and fundamental, and the results of this survey would seem to confirm their point of view. This council plans and promotes the policies and program of the parish. Its membership is drawn either from the coöperating churches or from the neighborhoods or communities within the area served by the parish. Especially in the Far West and New England, when selection is made on a locality basis, council members are not required to be church-members.

REPRESENTATION IN THE COUNCIL

Representation on the council varies from two to six for each church or locality included in the parish. In a few cases church and locality rep-

[2] Some of the unfulfilled plans of one of these fields have been used in publicity for the larger parish movement as if they were accomplished facts.

resentation are both used, usually two members from each church and one from each unchurched locality. In one parish the central church has four council members, the others have two. Most churches provide for members at large, elected by the council itself. The number of these runs from three to ten, with three or four as the rule. In the interdenominational parishes each member at large usually represents a different denomination. One parish provides that its council shall be made up on the basis of one delegate for each one hundred dollars contributed to the larger parish. The staff are always ex-officio members of the larger parish councils. In the case of larger parishes whose chief work lies in the field of religious education, the councils usually include the superintendent of each Sunday school and of each junior department, a representative of the young people, of the women's organizations and of the official boards of each church. Two-fifths of these councils meet monthly, a few on call or once a year, the rest every other month.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

One of the first tasks of this council is to prepare a constitution and by-laws for the parish to adopt. One might expect that these documents would reveal a good deal as to the functioning of larger parishes, but examination shows them to be rather conventional documents. Obviously, many of them originated from one or another common source and as such they reflect the two main types of larger parishes already apparent from a study of definitions and types in the last chapter.[3]

The constitutions and by-laws of the parishes surveyed show them to be concerned chiefly with such routine matters as name, officers and their duties, meetings, quorum and means of amendment. A few items are of more than passing interest.

The stated objectives stress the social as well as the individual side of religion. The parishes have been formed for "religious, moral and social welfare," for "the advancement of the Kingdom of God by correlating religious bodies and social welfare agencies" or "to coördinate the work of the churches in the promotion of the Kingdom of God through better methods of evangelism, religious education, worship, community service and business administration," and to "develop Christian character." Such phrases occurred in a majority of the constitutions, often in identical terminology.

[3] For sample constitutions see Appendix.

RELATIONSHIPS

It is frequently provided that each church included within the parish shall retain control of its own trust funds, if any, that it may withdraw on from three to twelve months' notice, and that it may without prejudice withhold coöperation on any given project. This provision, of course, applies only to those larger parishes that operate on an interchurch coöperative basis rather than as a single integrated organization.

AREA OF PARISHES

The area covered by the larger parishes varies greatly. In the New England and Middle Atlantic states three-quarters covered less than 100 square miles, nearly one-half less than fifty. In the South, where most of the larger parishes in the highlands were under mission board auspices, only one parish had an area of less than 100 square miles and three exceeded 500. In the middle-western states one-third fell in the smaller group of less than 100 square miles and two-thirds exceeded 100 square miles. In fact, one-third of the parishes in this area included more than 500 square miles. In the mountain and far-western states two-thirds had parish areas in excess of 500 square miles and some ran into the thousands. Only the few larger parishes in irrigated localities fell below 100 square miles. The more closely knit, integrated larger parishes, organized on a sociological basis and majoring on a broad program, usually with a multiple staff, were geographically smaller than the more loosely knit associations of churches.

Table II gives average area figures in square miles for the eighty-four larger parishes on which data were obtained. For comparative purposes the average area of agricultural village communities for the same areas is given.[4]

TABLE II—AREA, IN SQUARE MILES, OF LARGER PARISHES AND AGRICULTURAL VILLAGES, COMPARED BY REGION

Region	Number of Parishes	Area of Parishes	Area of Agricultural Villages
New England	12	72.5	*
Middle Atlantic	14	113.4	50
South	11	748.3	108
Middle West	30	368.0	114
Mountain	9	1,950.0	251
Far West	8	509.5	

* No data.

[4] Brunner and Kolb, *Rural Social Trends* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), pp. 93 ff.

COMMUNITIES INCLUDED

The average number of separate community or neighborhood points, other than that in which the central church was located, covered by these larger parishes, was seven. Parishes with multiple staffs of two or more members covered just twice as many such places as did larger parishes trying to get along with a one-staff member.

The number of service points of each parish varied with the region, but averages are meaningless unless presented according to types of parishes, region and size of staff, and the sample of eighty-four parishes is too small to permit of this subdivision. Therefore, the range in the number of localities served by regions is given below.

New England	3 to 9	Middle West	3 to 21
Middle Atlantic	1 to 15	Mountain	3 to 22
South	1 to 17	Far West	1 to 11

SIZE OF STAFF

The size of the larger parish staff also varied. Those surveyed had 3.3. Those studied simply by the questionnaire method had 2.2. In summer in the New England, Middle Atlantic and middle-western areas every other parish added an additional worker. About one-half of the parishes had two or more staff members. These figures include both main types of larger parishes. The average is brought up by the loosely integrated type. Under this arrangement, especially among the Methodists, pastors were assigned to regular appointments as usual, but were then automatically combined in a staff under the chairmanship of one minister. Each of the members of this "staff," in addition to the local duties with the congregation to which he or she was assigned, assumed special responsibility for some one aspect of the work throughout the parish, such as religious education, social activities, publicity, music, evangelism, community service, business administration. The recent Methodist Conference on Larger Parishes well said, "This plan for coöperative direction of the larger parish activities will be successful in proportion to the ability and willingness of the staff members to assume responsibility and exercise initiative." And it might be added "in proportion to the willingness of any given staff member with local responsibilities to accept leadership from his colleagues in every aspect of the work of the local church, save that to which he had himself been assigned." But of this problem, more later.

The more closely integrated type of larger parish, on the contrary, with its effort to serve all the people of an area, gives its staff members no local responsibilities. Each one is a specialist and in that speciality he is responsible only to the director and people of the whole parish, not to any local church within it.

Chapter III

ACTIVITIES, EQUIPMENT AND PROGRAMS

The activities of these larger parishes differ but little from the normal programs of successful country churches. Indeed, several of these parishes had been surveyed twelve years ago by the Institute of Social and Religious Research in connection with its study of specially successful rural churches.[1] A few had been written up in detail in connection with this same investigation.[2] In the case of many, however, and of all those of the closely integrated type, the objectives of the larger parishes differed from those of the usual rural church in that their service was designed not merely for those who were members, but for all the people in the area. This must be borne in mind in appraising their activities as described in this chapter and their achievements and advantages discussed in chapter vi.

Equipment

Before discussing the activities in connection with these parishes something should be said of their physical equipment for carrying on their programs. In many respects these larger parishes were less well equipped than the successful churches. Even the central churches of the thirty parishes surveyed had fewer rooms than the successful churches, the maximum being twelve, the average four, with only one-fourth of the central churches exceeding that average. The central churches of the New England and Middle Atlantic parishes were exactly average in size. Those of the Middle West averaged 3.5 rooms each; those of the mountain states 4.8. The effect of church extension society grants for buildings is to be seen in this last figure. The outlying churches were naturally smaller than those at the parish center. They averaged but two rooms, with the churches of the eastern regions slightly exceeding this average and those of the western regions falling below it.

[1] Cf. Brunner, *Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1923).

[2] Cf. Brunner, *Churches of Distinction in Town and Country* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1924), chapters vi and ix.

The thirty-eight parishes studied only by questionnaires showed very similar results, although the central churches were slightly smaller, especially in the eastern regions.

In short, the central church buildings of these larger parishes were just about the average for rural America. This is shown by their valuations, which, for the larger parishes surveyed, averaged $11,289 for the central churches and $3,565 for the outlying churches, most of them located in the open country or in small hamlets. The comparable figures for the parishes on which only questionnaire data were obtained were $8,189 and $3,040. In 1930, the average value of the village churches in twenty-one counties studied by the Institute of Social and Religious Research was $12,461—or more than $1,000 above the larger parish valuation for central churches. The open-country churches in these counties exceeded those of the larger parishes by about the same proportion. The achievements of the larger parishes, discussed later, cannot therefore be attributed to superior plant facilities.[3]

But if the church buildings were only about average, the equipment of these parishes was superior to that of the general run of churches in other respects. One-third furnished the minister or the staff an automobile or at least the expenses involved in using privately owned cars for parish business.[4] It is rarely that the average village or open-country church does this. Two-fifths had stereopticons and one-fifth had moving-picture machines. One-half of the parishes owned a mimeograph, one-fifth operated playgrounds and an equal proportion of those visited by field workers had parish or community houses which, of course, greatly supplemented for these parishes the otherwise rather average church buildings.

Activities and Programs

The activities of the larger parishes were not unduly limited by their buildings. Three-fourths of them promoted recreational activities, two-thirds were active in improving community conditions. About one-third were concerned with one or more aspects of health.[5] But statistics can-

[3] The value of central churches in multiple-staff larger parishes was about 14 per cent. above that in one-man parishes. Parsonages were also about average as their valuation of just over $3,000 was only a little below that of the parsonages in the twenty-one counties alluded to above.

[4] There is reason to believe that the thirty larger parishes surveyed made a better than average record in this respect. Thus, among forty of the parishes replying to the questionnaire, only one-sixth furnished transportation of any sort to staff members.

[5] This discussion excludes the normal program of worship and preaching conducted by all parishes and also the religious educational work discussed in the next chapter.

not give the picture of these manifold enterprises. Field workers' notes present a more vivid idea of what is going on.

Many parishes gave athletics a prominent place, but one in the Middle West has twenty athletic teams among its members, including boys', girls', men's and women's. Every part of the parish is drawn into contests of various types. It sponsors monthly social events in every neighborhood in its area and to some furnishes the only moving pictures the people can see without going to the near-by towns or cities. Four-H clubs are led, as is the case in a majority of the parishes. In other parishes nutrition classes are conducted. Dramatics are a strong point in a number of the larger parishes, and the few that have community houses possess good equipment for this activity. Music, too, holds a preferred place on many of the programs. Choirs have been strengthened, glee clubs, bands and orchestras organized, not only in the central churches but throughout many of the parishes. Home talent and other concerts are frequent. A few parishes have musical directors and more hope to secure such workers "when the depression is over."

One parish conducts an annual socio-religious survey with the help of three students, who are obtained each summer and who do intensive house-to-house cultivation of the area when not engaged in the daily vacation Bible schools. This parish, in a remote part of New England, also has a strong health program, with clinics of many sorts secured in coöperation both with the state board of health and with near-by physicians and dentists. Other activities of this parish include libraries, scouts, young peoples' and leaders' conferences, father and son and mother and daughter banquets, an apple-blossom festival, dramatics and a 1950 club. In this organization the young people consider what they want to be in 1950 and how to achieve their desires and ideals.

Fairs, picnics, field days of athletic and several other types, bi-monthly parish rallies of the men's and women's organizations, and hikes for young people are also frequently mentioned in the programs.

The announcements for July, 1932, for one parish, in addition to the usual activities of worship and religious education, included the following items:

1. Parish Picnic
   Taughannock, June (23—to be decided later)
2. Spring Youth Conference
   Time to be decided at the picnic.

3. Daily Vacation Bible Schools
   July 5-15 (young people wanted as helpers in all schools).
4. Boys' and Girls' Camps
   Details to be decided at picnic.
5. Mothers' Camp
   High-school girls wanted to keep house and cook so parish women can camp for four days.

SOME TYPICAL PROGRAMS

Three other typical programs are included, taken from the annual reports of the larger parishes concerned.

I. *Activities*

A Socio-Religious Program for 365 Days in the Year

Worship

1. Weekly Church Services
2. Summer Vespers
3. Mid-Week Cottage Meetings
4. Evangelism
5. Lenten Services
6. Apple-Blossom Service
7. Services in Isolated Districts

Young People's Work

1. Socio-Religious Clubs
2. Four-fold Programs
3. Discussion Groups
4. Hi-Y Club Leadership
5. Leadership Training
6. Deputation Teams
7. Outside Speakers of Note
8. Conferences:
   (a) Local
   (b) State & County Y.M.C.A.
   (c) Cobbosseecontee

Music

1. Adult Choir Training
2. Junior Choir Training
3. Community "Sings"
4. New Hymnals
5. New Instruments

Pastoral Work

1. Every Home Visitation
2. Personal Conferences
3. Life Guidance
4. Weddings and Funerals
5. Administrative Activities

Religious Education

1. Church Schools
2. Improved Curriculum
3. Teacher Training Guidance
4. Week-Day Religious Education
5. Vacation Church Schools
6. Adult Bible Study
7. Missionary Education
8. Stereopticon Lectures
9. Church Calendars

Social Activities

1. Father and Son Banquets
2. Mother and Daughter Luncheons
3. Mid-Winter Carnivals
4. Mid-Summer Field Day
5. Old Home Days
6. Fellowship Suppers
7. Socials and Hikes

II. *The Current and Past Year*

Program: Interesting Items and Events

The Regional Parish has carried on its regular program without interruption. This program includes: Sunday schools in all the communities, two Boy Scout Troops with weekly Patrol meetings in every community, Camp Fire groups, young people's meetings, vacation schools, pastoral visiting, training in music, and the regular morning services in all the churches every Sunday.

Items of Interest Include:

The Dental Clinic caring for fifty children. Besides cleaning and filling, 152 teeth were extracted.

Hospital care provided in special cases.

Prompt attention to families and individuals in need of special help of any kind.

Sunday Evening Services throughout the summer with many able preachers and speakers.

Three Father and Son, and four Mother and Daughter banquets with a total attendance of 650.

The visit of a large delegation of students from the Hartford and Yale Theological Seminaries.

The visit of 130 rural workers from the Ocean Park Conference with a communion service and a supper at Camp O-at-ka.

A successful Sunday School Workers' Institute on the five Monday evenings of November.

A Vacation School Institute at Camp O-at-ka for high-school pupils who are carrying on this summer's Vacation Schools.

The annual "Apple-Blossom Service" at Camp O-at-ka, most successful in interest and attendance.

Boy Scout Events

Formation of a second Troop No. 57. Total enrollment of the two troops, 120.

Climbing Mount Washington.

Regional Parish Scout Camp on Moose Pond.

Five baccalaureate sermons by members of the Staff.

Regional Parish Bulletin published weekly.

Successful Financial Administration

Since the beginning of the Regional Parish the Treasurer's account has shown a balanced budget at the end of each year. This current year, closing September 30, all obligations have been met to August 1. All funds of the Regional Parish as a whole go to the central treasury. All accounts are carefully kept and audited.

III. Description of a County Larger Parish's Special Events

1. Young People's Rallies: Held monthly, rotating among the various churches. Attendance ranges from 75 to 200. These are social in character.

2. Religious Education Institutes: Not a standard training school. A Sunday afternoon is devoted to a general assembly and departmental conferences.

A Vacation Church School Institute also has been held which outlined the whole Daily Vacation Church School plan, dealt with the problems of administration, curriculum, etc. Churches are beginning to have church school conferences locally.

3. Exchange of Resources: The various young people's societies and groups are encouraged to and do entertain one another in their various churches. The young people of the church have toured the entire Larger Parish on Sunday nights with music, movies, orchestra. The pastors help one another when needed. Conferences on church finance have been conducted by a staff member in most of the churches, direct assistance being given to organize financial campaigns.

4. Missionary Conferences: A conference of local benevolence committees, with a special speaker, has been held. Likewise the ladies of the Women's Foreign Missions Society have met in a group for inspirational missionary program.

5. Evangelism: One conference on evangelism has been held. Assistance has been rendered by pastors to one another in a few cases. A special series of meetings were held in the various churches by the staff during the pre-Easter season of 1933. However, the attendance from neighboring churches during the meetings was disappointing. This effort was the least successful of any undertaken.

6. Field Day: Held every year in June. Attendance 500 to 600. Contests mark the day's program. General good fellowship prevails. Has given the small churches the thrill of something big. A silver loving cup awarded to the church carrying away the most points in contests and attendance.

7. Daily Vacation Church Schools: Held by individual churches. Most of them have to be started through the inspiration of the group's interest in the movement.

8. Sunday Evening Assemblies in Summer: For three summers these were conducted on the plan of special music and speaker. One year, a camp fire for young people was held afterward. The attendance at these services ranged from 150 to 300. But interest seemed to lag in 1932. The meetings are held at a park which is located at center of Larger Parish area. A pavilion has been used for the meeting. Cars were parked around the building. Many sat in cars. This season (1933) an orchestral concert, plus a religious or highly moral motion picture will be shown in the hope that this will draw larger crowds as well as give a more acceptable message.

9. Community Motion Picture Programs: As a means of community recreational service as well as an agency for contacting the communities for the church, community open-air motion picture programs are being sponsored by the Larger Parish in five towns. Coöperation of the business men in financing the project was secured.

10. Men's Meetings: These are planned and promoted by a committee of the council headed by one of the pastors. Speakers on various subjects of interest to men in the town and country are brought into the meetings. This is a new project and gives evidence of developing into a worthwhile project.

Field workers' reports showed that for the most part the activities listed have been conducted by this parish.

A parish or community house, where found, was always well and profitably used. One combined gymnasium-auditorium is used by the high school for its indoor athletics at a nominal rental. The Boy and Girl Scouts also use the building; school commencements and community functions are held here. The Farm Bureau uses it for 4-H Club meetings. Home Bureau gives its demonstrations here. Banquets of every type are held in the hall as well as organized dramatics and a fall flower show. The Ladies' Aid also meets here. Open forums for young people have been held here. The Young People's Sunday-school Class (better known as a Forum Discussion) meets here and not at the church. The pastor is the discussion leader.

PUBLICITY

Publicity was an important aid in the programs of the larger parishes. About half of the multiple-staff parishes and some of the others had parish papers, although some of these had just been or were about to be given up, because of reduced income due to the depression. The average paper was from four to eight pages, either printed or mimeographed. A number carried special features, such as cartoons, biblical cross-word puzzles, illustrations, departments edited by the young people and the like. The local newspapers circulating in larger parish areas were for the most part anxious to carry their news.

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICE

Community service as an activity of these churches was manifested in many ways. A few of these have been mentioned above in other connections, but other examples of community service, especially those growing out of the depression, seem important enough to list.

The pastors of one-tenth of the churches were serving as county or community chairmen for the distribution of relief, both food and clothing, to families of village unemployed or to bankrupt farmers. Several others were active in this work, although without official connections. One minister, in the hardest-hit county in his state, organized his people somewhat along the lines of the early Christian community. Those who still had resources sponsored those who had become destitute. Each such relatively fortunate family was assisting from six to twelve others.

Somewhat different was another situation in the Middle West. For the past six years all social work in the northern half of the county has been directly under the larger parish and its pastor. The pastor is an officer of the county court and has charge of the juvenile work for the entire county. More than 7,300 garments a year are given to the settlers and needy, distributed from the manse. No social work is being done in this country other than that by the parish workers, and it was in recognition of this fact that, upon the request of the county judge, the pastor became a court officer. The work is also recognized by the State Board of Control, and the minister and his wife are advisory workers with that department.

Similar records came from other parishes. Pastors or staff members served as local or district chairmen or committeemen for the Red Cross, the Federal Relief Administration and the like. They were found on the boards of county hospitals, councils of social work, farm bureaus, Y. M. and Y. W. C. A.'s and similar agencies. On the other hand, six parishes were surveyed where the director was definitely hostile to such activities.

In a number of places larger parish staff members transport doctors in case of need, thereby saving their people mileage charges ranging from $1 to $2 a mile. In another case, transportation of hospital cases was cared for by the parish. Staff members also arrange to buy and sell for members to save their individual travel. These are depression measures. Relations with the schools are also close. Almost three-quarters of the larger parishes coöperated with them. Buildings and equipment of the larger parishes are loaned to schools and vice versa. Staff members frequently visit and speak at the schools in their areas. Care is taken not to have conflicts in dates of special events. There is also an exchange of talent at times, and many of the teachers accept responsibilities in the work of the larger parishes.

ADULT EDUCATION

Quite apart from the work of religious education, some of these larger parishes are engaged in activities connected with adult education. One-sixth have libraries, some of which reach all or most of the neighborhoods served by the parish. Several have book clubs, and as people began cutting down their subscriptions to magazines on account of lowered incomes, magazine clubs were formed in a number of places. The interest

in current topics is reported as never keener and about one-sixth of the parishes are holding forums. In several places these appeal particularly to the older youth or younger married people. One parish has an $8,000 farm used in part for demonstrations in coöperation with the agricultural extension service. Other parishes coöperate with this service in many ways. The staffs of several parishes also assist in community projects in adult education.

These manifold activities do not interfere with the spiritual and religious educational programs, but rather supplement them and, in the judgment of those concerned, help to make the people realize the vital interest of the church in daily life and bread. There were some parishes, however, especially in the mountain states, where the problem of carrying over interest from the social to the religious program was far from solved.

These community activities were the more necessary because the communities in which the larger parishes were operating were, many of them, under-organized as compared with many in rural America. The average agricultural village community has more than a score of social organizations, excluding those of the school and church. The communities of the larger parishes surveyed average less than half this number, and those replying by questionnaire had only about six per community. This is a reflection of the fact that these parishes were often organized in places handicapped by social or economic disadvantages, or in places that, because of low population density or similar demographic factors, presented real problems from the point of view of social organizations. In some places also, as noted earlier, the excellent and inclusive organization and service of the larger parish obviated the necessity of some types of secular community agencies.

Larger Parishes and Interdenominational Coöperation

There remains the whole question of the degree to which the larger parishes coöperate with other churches in their communities. In this connection it is important to recall that one of the pleas frequently made for larger parishes is that they help to solve the evils of denominational competition in rural America. It is not surprising to find, therefore, that more than one-fifth of the larger parishes studied both by field survey and by questionnaire were interdenominationally organized. It should not be assumed, however, that the larger parishes monopolize their fields. The average parish shared its territory with five Protestant churches and

one Roman Catholic. This average was brought up by the Middle West, where the respective figures are eight and two, and by the South. In the mountain and far-western states larger parishes had less competition. Only a few, however, had none. This being the case, it is interesting to note that two-thirds of all larger parishes surveyed or reporting, conducted union services with other denominations. In most of the remaining third, there was opposition to such services on the part of the staff.

The contrasting attitudes of these two groups, one coöperative, the other non-cöoperative and half as large, was quite clear from field-work interviews and letters.

Said one larger parish director, "I will coöperate with no community organization and will hold no union services. The larger parish is to be used not for interdenominationalism but for strengthening the denomination. My parish is denominational. I work only for it and its interests."

Said another, "My function is to be a missionary for my denomination, to start new churches or open closed ones and associate them with my larger parish."

On the other hand, in several parishes, both interdenominational and otherwise, field workers frequently heard, "You can't tell a Baptist from a Methodist or either from a Presbyterian any more."

In another community the larger parish holds union Thanksgiving and Lenten services with its only neighbor, an Episcopal church. A California larger parish reported: "All churches of the parish are community churches and represent comity agreement of denominations, and there are no other denominational enterprises."

It should be noted, however, that coöperation is relatively so new in local religious organization that it is easily upset. A promising prospective interdenominational larger parish, advocated by the state and national boards of the two denominations concerned, fell through because—

First, the village church at the center and its out-station hesitated and finally declined to join with five other churches of its denomination within the trade area in a larger parish organization.

Second, this influenced the four small and struggling churches of the other denomination concerned to try to continue to go it alone.

Another example of the shallow rootage of coöperation comes from an eastern larger parish in which two denominations federated. The poorer church building was converted into a parish house. All went well for several years. But then the minister tried to remove the dishes bought

by the Ladies' Aid of denomination X into the building formerly owned by denomination Y, now the parish hall. The X ladies rose *en masse* and declared they would not have their dishes moved to a Y church. Only the most strenuous efforts saved this larger parish from breaking up over the grave issue.

None the less the larger parishes covered in this study were certainly somewhat more coöperative in their relations with community agencies and with other churches, than is the general average of rural churches in the United States.

Financing the Larger Parish

This chapter has sought to tell the story of the program, activities and coöperative arrangements of larger parishes. There remains a final question as to how the program described was financed. It must be recalled in this connection that the program of these parishes exceeds that of the average church, that the movement has prestige and that through home-mission aid it claims the support of a wide public.

Some larger parishes have central treasuries through which all local, general and benevolent projects are financed. This is almost invariably the case with the closely integrated type of parish. With the loosely integrated type, largely although not exclusively Methodist, in most cases each church takes care of its local salaries and expenses, and finances only the coöperative projects through a central treasury. Local conditions and the type of larger parish determines the kind of financial policy desirable. Methods of raising money for the central treasury vary as with the local church. Income from the projects, sale of advertising space, free-will offerings, assessment to the churches on the per capita basis and personal contributions are some of the methods now being used to meet the cost of the larger parishes.

BUDGETS

The larger parishes in charge of a single employed minister had surprisingly low budgets, averaging $1,852. This is less than the average budget of churches in villages of less than 1,000 population, which in 1930 amounted to $1,896. When the comparison is made with the average circuit of 2.7 churches, as found in the Institute's re-survey of 140 selected village communities and twenty-one counties, the one-man larger parishes show up still less favorably, for the average budgets of such circuits in 1930

amounted to $2,087.[6] When it is considered that these larger parishes combined several churches with a total membership nearly one-third larger than that of the village churches alluded to, and about the same as that of the open-country circuits, their showing does not appear exceptional, even when allowance is made for the deepening of the depression between 1930 and 1932.

The multiple-staff parishes naturally have much larger budgets, as is shown in Table III. The model average proved to be about $5,000, although the arithmetical ran about 10 per cent. under this figure.

TABLE III—AVERAGE BUDGETS OF MULTIPLE-STAFF LARGER PARISHES

	Surveyed Sample		Questionnaire Sample		Total	
	Number Parishes	Average Budget	Number Parishes	Average Budget	Number Parishes	Average Budget
All Regions	25	$4,579	13	$4,110	38	$4,418
New England ...	3	5,125	2	8,725	5	6,565
Middle Atlantic ..	6	5,078	1	7,700	7	5,456
South	*	——	6	2,088	6	2,088
Middle West	12	5,348	2	4,060	14	5,164
Mountain	4	1,636	0	——	—	1,636
Far West	*	——	2	3,815	—	3,815

* No parishes in this region studied by field workers.

These totals, of course, are much higher than the average budgets of rural churches. In fact, they are about double that of the average village church.

PER MEMBER CONTRIBUTIONS

The annual per capita contributions are not, however, very high. For the multiple-staff larger parishes they averaged $14.75 for those surveyed, and $12.46 for those reporting by questionnaire. The comparable figures for the one-man parishes amounted to $9.43 and $10.03, respectively. The 1930 figures for per capita contributions in village and open-country churches were $16.38 and $8.57, respectively.

One marked feature of larger parish finances is the small proportion of the total amount locally raised that goes for missionary and benevolent purposes, slightly less than 10 per cent. This is less than one-half the proportion of the average rural church in 1930. The proportion among all rural churches had been decreasing since 1925, and the decrease was doubtless accelerated by the depression, but even so, considering the total

[6] Derived from data published in *Rural Social Trends*, Appendix E.

budgets, the figure is a small one. It is perhaps a reflection both of the demands of a more varied than average program and of the fact that many of these larger parishes were organized in areas where the church had previously been weak, even despised.

HOME-MISSION AID

These data on total budgets exclude contributions of $50,000 in one church to a new building and also exclude all home-mission aid extended to larger parishes by national, state or district denominational agencies. This aid proved to be frequently given and of such generous proportions as to lend some justification to two opinions frequently expressed in interviews, namely, that larger parishes could not be successful without such aid, and that the use of the term larger parish "frequently secured grants for work that otherwise would not have received them." Some, although not all, mission boards appear to make no more effort to check up on the inherent worth of a project called a larger parish than the Reconstruction Finance Corporation did to check on the inherent financial strength of some of the banks and railroads to which it loaned money. The problem is recognized, however. A recent Methodist Larger Parish Conference, in a report signed by a national officer as chairman, declared: "Too frequently larger parishes are organized in the hope of receiving missionary assistance, when the proper pooling of financial resources *would eliminate the necessity of outside aid.*" (Italics author's.) Just how this pooling is to be accomplished under the method of financing used by most loosely integrated parishes and described above, is a problem on which this conference threw no light.

More than three-fourths of all the larger parishes surveyed or responding to the questionnaire were receiving grants in aid. In no region did the proportion aided drop below one-half. In the southern and mountain states every larger parish on which data could be secured was being so helped. These figures are significant because the usual ratio of aided churches to the total number in rural America is one in five. Moreover, the average grant was very large as rural home-mission aid goes, amounting to $963 per parish assisted. The average rural grant for all churches aided in 1930 was $275, less than one-third as much. Even excluding the South, where the average grants amounted to almost $2,400, the figure was $700. Table IV gives the regional details.

TABLE IV—HOME-MISSION AID TO LARGER PARISHES, BY REGION *

	Average Aid per Parish
All Regions	$963
New England	393
Middle Atlantic	1,187
South	2,390
Middle West	686
Mountain	681
Far West	457

* This table combines the data for the parishes surveyed and those studied only by questionnaire.

These figures show that the mission agencies are thoroughly in earnest in the effort to demonstrate whether or not the larger parish technique is an answer to the problem of effective religious ministry in the rural areas. The cases where such aid is extended for purposes largely competitive are overwhelmingly outnumbered in all but two denominations by those where the assistance seems entirely legitimate. There can be no question that some parishes could not carry on without the outside aid they receive and that the work of others would suffer without it. The larger parish is an experiment in a new technique. It is an experimental invention, and inventions until perfected always demand considerable investment. But the movement cannot permanently continue on such a highly subsidized basis. Even many of the parishes unaided by mission funds have generous outside givers, such as summer residents and former members who have moved away but like to send gifts "back home." [7]

EFFECT OF DEPRESSION

Before leaving this subject of home-mission aid it should be pointed out that this study was carried through during the early 1930's, when an acute depression gripped the nation. Several parishes had laid out well-considered financial programs to eliminate the necessity for home-mission aid by 1932, '33 or '34, but the depression had in each case upset the calculations. In one parish 75 per cent. of the families were receiving Red Cross aid in April, 1933. In another, receipts had dropped by 50 per cent. in 1932, as compared with 1929. A third, which had been building up a small surplus in the late 1920's, found itself, in June of 1933, four months behind in salaries. The farmers were paying in kind, and were credited

[7] One larger parish at the time of the survey was in serious financial difficulty because an annual gift of $3,000, half the budget, had to be withdrawn.

at local retail prices. Salary cuts up to 33.3 per cent. had been taken, in part to save the dismissal of a staff member, though in other instances staff workers had been dropped. In the main, moreover, the financial systems of the larger parishes were good. Budgets were carefully drawn and approved methods of raising funds were used. But they could not expect to pass through the depression unscathed. The damage may be severe, if home-mission funds are cut off or drastically reduced.

One parish at least turned the depression to good account. It is building a $6,000 manse and using the labor of unemployed artisans in the community, whose wages, at depression rates, are being paid by the more prosperous members of the parish in lieu of contributions to the building fund.

This discussion of the larger parish, its activities and their financing has thus far omitted one of the most important aspects of larger parish work, and one where it has gained, perhaps, its greatest success—religious education. Because of its importance, this subject has been reserved for consideration in the next chapter.

Chapter IV

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Earlier surveys of the Institute of Social and Religious Research made quite clear that religious education was one of the weakest points in the program of the rural church. Newer developments in urban churches, made possible in part by their large enrollments and staffs, seemed to have passed by the rural church. Religious educational leaders in their experiments also neglected the small church school. The larger parishes have made a determined and somewhat successful attack upon this problem. Indeed, some of the loosely integrated types of larger parishes were organized and exist chiefly for religious educational work.

Sunday-school Membership and Attendance

One evidence of the results of this work is to be found in the gains in enrollment. The churches of the sixty-six larger parishes, for which data were secured, had 13,416 pupils enrolled in their Sunday schools prior to the organization of the parishes. At the time of the survey the figure was 20,054, a gain of practically 50 per cent. Parishes with a multiple staff registered most of this gain.

The total average membership in the Sunday schools of each one-man larger parish was 184. The multiple-staff larger parishes enrolled, on an average, 451.[1]

In the matter of attendance the one-man parishes, which as a rule were smaller and more compact, made a better record. On the average, 70.6 per cent. of their enrollment was present each Sunday. In the multiple-staff larger parishes the average was 64 per cent. The latter, therefore, secure no more than the normal average attendance at the rural Sunday schools of the nation, while the former exceed the average by six points.[2] The

[1] These are per parish averages, not per school. On a per school basis the respective averages are thirty-two and ninety. In other words, these schools are distinctly smaller than the average in rural America which in the open country enroll sixty-six and in the village 127. This in an indication of a matter discussed in chapter vi. namely, that these larger parishes are often organized in difficult situations.

[2] Cf. Brunner and Kolb, *Rural Social Trends* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933). Table 56, p. 357.

poorer record of the multiple-staff larger parishes in this respect is in part a result of the far wider areas covered by them, as compared to the one-man parishes, but is chiefly due to the loosely integrated type of parishes in which, as explained in chapter i, the pastors of a considerable number of associated churches are automatically considered a staff. If the larger parishes of the closely integrated type of multiple staff are considered alone, their record in this and other respects is invariably better than that of either the one-man larger parish or the loosely integrated type. Regional factors also enter in. One in six of the multiple-staff larger parishes, but one in five of the one-man group were in the South. The average attendance in the former group was slightly less than 60 per cent.[8], which disproportionately reduced the general average for the multiple-staff parishes.

Comparison of Programs with Other Rural Churches

A further study of the programs shows that, despite small individual schools and despite the fact that many of them are operating in situations of far above average difficulty, the combination of the schools of the parish, often under well-qualified leadership, makes possible a far richer program than the average rural church school enjoys. This can be shown by a series of contrasts. One less than half of the larger parish Sunday schools have teacher-training classes. The national average for rural churches is one in seven. Fifty-six per cent. have classes to prepare for church-membership, well over twice the national average. Four in six have daily vacation Bible schools—four times as many as the general run of rural churches. As a rule, one in ten of the rural church schools have mission-study classes. The larger parishes do four and a half times

[8] The sample of sixty-six larger parishes, on which the above statements are based, is made up of thirty-eight that answered questionnaires and twenty-eight that were visited by field workers, who checked the local records carefully. The data for this latter and smaller group are, therefore, presumably more accurate, and average enrollment and attendance figures are therefore given below for this sample:

Region	Number of Parishes	S. S. Enrollment Per Parish	S. S. Attendance Per Parish	Ratio of Attendance to Enrollment
All	28	442	284	64.2
New England	4	223	146	65.5
Middle Atlantic	7	551	345	62.6
Middle West	12	615	374	60.8
Mountain	5	177	137	77.4

The ratio of attendance to enrollment in the other or questionnaire sample was 74 per cent.

as well. Just one church in twelve attempts week-day religious education, but among the larger parishes the proportion is one in five.[4]

LESSON MATERIALS

A far larger proportion of larger parishes are using the more progressive type of pupil material than is usually the case. Indeed, a few are even experimenting with their own materials, especially in primary, young people's and adult classes. As a rule, rural church schools use the so-called "uniform lessons"—that is, the same lesson topic is considered by all classes on any given Sunday. At best, lessons roughly graded by broad age-groups are employed. In the larger parish schools, uniform lessons are used in less than two-fifths of the primary and junior classes and in only one-half of the intermediate groups. Group graded or closely graded lessons divide the rest. Among the seniors two-thirds of the classes use the uniform lessons.

It seems beyond all doubt that the larger parish activities in the field of religious education are on a far better educational plane, have a wider curriculum and more diversified activities than the general run of rural churches.

Diversified Programs

One reason for this record is that a considerable majority of the larger parishes with a multiple staff employ a director of religious education on full time. Indeed a few have two directors. Several other multiple-staff parishes and a number of one-man parishes have added assistance in this field during the summer, through the employment of theological students. In many parishes the religious educational work goes far beyond the work in the church school and includes all young people's activities. Thus, in one New York State parish there are daily vacation Bible schools in all communities in the parish. Week-day religious education is given in connection with the public schools. Leadership training conferences are conducted. There are a series of plays and musicals. Choirs have been organized at most churches. Libraries, especially for children, have been established. Camps are conducted in the summer and delegates are sent to interdenominational young people's conferences. Religious educational work is given in some of the 4-H clubs of the state agricultural extension service. All this is in addition to the usual work of the church schools

[4] Cf. Brunner and Kolb, *op. cit.*, Table 58, p. 357.

and the young people's societies, such as Christian Endeavor. In many parishes, especially in the New England and Middle Atlantic states, all the young people's work is planned and conducted by a parish-wide council of young people.

Alta A. Miller, in an unpublished master's thesis, submitted to the School of Education of Northwestern University in June, 1933, entitled, "The Religious Educational Status and Activities in Larger Parishes," summarizes by types and age-groups the religious educational activities, other than those distinctly religious in character, of 259 churches in the thirty-one parishes he studied, as follows:

TABLE V—AGE-GROUP ACTIVITIES IN THIRTY-ONE LARGER PARISHES, BY TYPES

Activity Group	Primary No.	Junior No.	Inter-mediate No.	Senior No.	Young People No.	Adult No.
Social	10	21	21	18	11	28
Recreation	5	16	16	15	18	10
Dramatic	1	8	8	12	12	5
Missionary	5	19	21	12	12	38
Music	0	12	25	14	34	34
Age-group Societies	0	28	23	39	89	2
Other	0	0	40	3	2	3

Religious Education as the Basis of a Larger Parish

As already noted, some of the larger parishes are formed exclusively for achieving more efficient work in religious education. Such parishes are integrated only by this one interest. The individual churches remain wholly independent in all respects. The type is numerous enough to deserve more extended description.

One such parish has its headquarters in a suburban and college town of some 7,000 population. The Presbyterian, Methodist and two Negro churches in this place belong to the parish, the first-named furnishing office space and equipment. Two of the three churches in a near-by suburban community also belong. Six other communities and several neighborhoods are reached, one rural-industrial, two suburban and three agricultural. The area covered is about a quarter of a county. There are few, if any, social or economic relationships among these communities.

The purpose of this parish is to undertake religious work that can be done better coöperatively than by each of the churches individually. The program includes vacation church schools, week-day religious education,

training church-school teachers and officers through classes, workers' conferences and demonstrations, social and religious work for young people, and some evangelism.

All persons holding membership in the coöperating churches are members of the larger parish, as is any one who lives within its area and contributes time or money. Each church has entire liberty to refrain from coöperating on any specific project, and any church may withdraw after six months' notice.

The larger parish is controlled by a council, made up of the superintendents of each church school, the superintendents of any one of the divisions of each church school, representatives of each young people's group, representatives of the women's organizations of each church, a member of the lay governing body of each church and one delegate-at-large from each church. Meetings of the council are held monthly.

The staff is composed of the pastors of the coöperating churches and the director of religious education for the parish as a whole. In theory, any member of this staff may be called upon for service in any of the churches of the parish and for the joint activities of the entire parish.

Each church continues to have complete charge of its financial affairs and at the present time none of them are contributing to the parish, the funds of which come exclusively from the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church and the Board of Home Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The budget is $1,500, of which $1,200 is for the salary of the religious educational worker of the parish and $300 for her expenses.

There is a children's work committee. Special conferences have been held for the superintendents of the schools of the parishes; assistance has been rendered all of the churches in the observance of special holidays, such as Christmas, Easter, etc. Vacation schools have been held and teachers trained.

Specifically the program of the year has included the following activities under the principal heads noted above.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK

Reference materials dealing with recreation and worship were given to all of the churches. A larger parish young people's committee was formed, which arranged for the young people's rallies. A young people's group was organized at each of two churches that did not have one. The

young people's clubs of the two Negro churches had been consolidated and were doing very helpful work with the Negro group in the city, but with the exception of one public service this work was a matter of indirect influence as nearly as the surveyor could determine.

There was a great deal of visitation back and forth among the young people's groups of the parish.

DAILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Perhaps the two most significant pieces of work in this parish concern, first, the daily vacation Bible school, and second, week-day religious education.

Week-day religious education was given in the schools of nine of the localities of the parish. These did not include those of the college town. In seven of these nine schools the work was done for credit in regular school hours. There was no work of this sort within the confines of the parish prior to its organization.

There were six daily vacation Bible schools in the summer of 1932, as against one the previous year. In 1931, the one school enrolled 100 children. In the summer of 1932 there were six schools, with a total enrollment of 361. With the exception of a union school, conducted by the Presbyterian and Methodist churches of the college town for a period of four weeks, the schools of the parish were two weeks in length. The average enrollment of the rural schools was forty-nine.

The dates of these schools were so arranged that the larger parish worker was able to give practically full time to each one.

In 1932, the parish worker taught a class, was responsible for the worship periods and worship training, or assisted the teachers of the various classes by turn, as the local situations made most desirable. Consultation with the teachers was a part of the daily schedule.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS

The director of religious education for the parish is practically the supervising principal of the church schools of the coöperating congregations. She visits these schools constantly, is present at most of the teachers' meetings, many of which are devoted to training. She takes over classes, demonstrating methods of teaching, and has set up a program of leadership training in four of the churches. In one of these there is also a non-credit class that works on each Sunday's lesson a week in advance. The curriculum is being graded in the schools as rapidly as possible.

The parish is also coöperating in the rather extensive plans of religious education institutes, conducted by the county branch of the State Council of Religious Education.

In the field of adult education, beginnings have been made with parent education in some of the more needy rural communities through mothers' groups. The young people's groups also have a division that is studying the history of religious drama, and it is producing pageants and religious plays.

There is no inherent sociological foundation for this work. The enterprise is more accurately to be described as an interdenominational or coöperative religious education organization than as a larger parish. All of the churches are satisfied and coöperate because it is giving to each of them the part-time assistance of a very well-trained worker in the field of religious education. The young people are the only ones that seem to be showing any sort of consciousness of unity. The young people's rallies have been attended by as many as 600, and individual representations at many of the young people's activities are considerably in excess of those of these same churches at denominational young people's affairs. There is a problem here, in that the denominational young people's work of a given denomination is less necessary, as a result of the program described, than would otherwise be the case.

A TYPICAL PROGRAM

In summary, there is appended a statement of the parish goals in religious education for the year 1932-33. All of these, except the last two, have been achieved in some of the churches of this parish and some in all.

COMMUNITY LARGER PARISH

GOALS FOR THE YEAR

1932-1933

1. Beautification of the church grounds by the planting of some well-placed shrubbery, as a project of some class or organization.
2. The securing of a large copy of some of the great masterpieces (in color if possible) for the walls of the church schoolroom.
3. Pupil participation in planning and in conducting worship services in the church school.
4. A vacation church school in each church, or one available for every child in each parish.
5. At least one auto-load of teachers from each church school present at four of the sixteen county conferences.

6. The organization of a class in parent education at the time of the church school session; or the adaptation of the program of some other organization so that due consideration may be given to the teaching of religion in the home.

7. Each church school worker reading at least one book each year pertaining to his particular work, or subscribing to and reading regularly at least one of the denominational magazines.

8. Each church school conducting workers' conferences regularly; preferably once a month.

9. At least one representative present from each church at a summer school of religious education.

10. Each school securing more teaching time, either on Sunday or during the week through; (a) Providing an extended church school session of the class or department. (b) Expanding the present hour by combining in worship with the worship service of the church. (c) Organizing an extra session of the class or department during the week.

11. A class in Christian citizenship in each church, for young people or adults, dealing with local government, law enforcement, public health and various phases of the part a Christian may play in his home community.

12. A class in preparatory church-membership, conducted by the pastor.

It is quite certain that few, if any, of the schools outside the two largest communities could have accomplished anything like as much in their religious education program, had they not been associated with this larger parish. Not all urban-rural efforts at larger parish coöperation have been as successful as this one. Nevertheless, successful examples of rural church coöperation in similar programs, both on an interdenominational and on a denominational basis, are recorded in a number of cases.[5]

[5] See Appendix C for a report submitted by the director of religious education in a similar but denominational parish in the Southern Mountains.

Chapter V

LARGER PARISH STAFFS

It goes without saying that in any experiment in a new social technique such as the larger parish plan is, the leadership to which the venture is entrusted is of paramount importance. On this point a recent conference, held under the auspices of the rural church department of the Methodist Episcopal Church, declared:

"The larger parish makes special demands on the professional leadership employed. In addition to the qualifications usually mentioned as necessary for the rural ministry, such as vision, initiative, courage, perseverance, technical training in the use of methods and psychology, the larger parish plan demands of its leaders a coöperative spirit based upon the Christian philosophy of sharing. Those with an individualistic temperament or professional ambitions will do better to seek opportunities of service elsewhere.

"The larger parish offers the opportunity for Christian ministers and churches to subordinate professional ambitions and individualistic temperaments to the task of building the Kingdom of God. It will be unfortunate if leadership in larger parishes shall be delegated exclusively to those professionally trained and employed. If the Kingdom of God is to have value for those who comprise it, the laymen must be organized and trained for leadership. In some situations it may be necessary for the majority of the leadership to be in the hands of the laity."

Lay Leadership in One-man Larger Parishes

The suggestion in this statement that volunteer leadership be utilized is interesting. In one-man larger parishes heavy reliance has to be placed upon lay leaders. The Christian church has always emphasized the obligation of service that rests upon its members. There can be little doubt but that the larger parish plan offers new opportunities for such service. The use of such leadership, however, places peculiarly heavy responsibilities upon the minister for leadership training in terms of the special tasks of the larger parish.

Unfortunately, as nearly as can be determined in a study of this sort, the ministers of most of the one-man larger parishes seemed none too able to perform this function. As will be noted later, they were less well-

paid and well-trained than the directors or chief ministers of the multiple-staff parishes. It was harder for them to overcome the psychology of the old circuit types of rural religious work, or even that of ministry to a single church at the center. Thus, in one church the larger parish minister was devoting much of his attention to calling on village families and to improving the village church building, carrying out part of the repairs and painting himself, while he had done nothing about a projected country Sunday school, though he had been in his position for a year. This illustrates a rather common tendency. Many of the ministers, in attempting to keep up the circuit routine of preaching and in trying to run the relatively more complicated machinery of the larger parish, failed lamentably in the requirements for leadership training. There was more leadership training relatively and more use of laymen in the multiple-staff larger parishes than in the others. Furthermore, the training and extensive use of lay leadership require the type of personality in the minister that inspires loyalty to the work, that can delegate responsibility and organize an elaborate and far-flung program, without allowing the details of such work to crowd out the more important matters. These are rare traits.

The one-man parish, if it is to succeed, depends also upon the development of an administrative technique, for which ministers are not yet trained. In fact, the need has not even been recognized. All this again raises questions as to the wisdom of calling work a larger parish, that is little more than a circuit system glorified by the attempt to operate it more efficiently than is traditionally possible. This point demands special consideration, because the one-man larger parishes are found, for the most part, in those denominations that change ministerial appointments rather frequently. Often the pastor originally in charge of a one-man parish is succeeded by one less capable of administering it, and the movement is soon charged with another failure.[1]

One-man Parish and Multiple-staff Results Compared

Thus it is that on the basis of such statistical comparisons as have appeared thus far in this study or will follow as well as on others tabulated but not here detailed, and on the overwhelming testimony of de-

[1] It should be stated that several larger parishes have changed from multiple-staff to one-man parishes in the last year or two, because of the depression. In some of these the people have rallied to the support of the remaining minister, and thus far the work, although crippled, is being carried on with a fair degree of success and satisfaction. Other larger parishes under similar circumstances, however, have failed to maintain their work.

nominational executives, ministers and larger parish members, the one-man larger parish does not produce as good results per unit of money and time expended as does the multiple-staff parish.

The comparisons alluded to show, among other things, that the multiple exceeds the one-man parish in membership, rate of net gain in church and Sunday-school members, per capita giving, equipment, number of activities and breadth of program.

One big reason for this advantage lies in the more intensive attention a parish receives with a multiple staff. It averages 112 members per staff member, the one-man parish, 175. The latter thus has half again as many members for each full-time employed worker as the former but, not to burden the reader with too many figures, the former's budget was found to be more than twice as large as the latter's, its rate of increase in church-membership almost double and its Sunday-school increase five times as great. Some of the other measures showed similar results. It appears that the advantage clearly lies with the multiple-staff larger parish, as compared with the one-man parish.[2] This conclusion is based on the records of thirty-eight multiple-staff larger parishes, two-thirds of them surveyed and the rest studied by questionnaire, and twenty-nine one-man parishes, only one-fifth of which were surveyed.

Size of Staff

The average full-time multiple staff of a larger parish consisted of a director and two assistants. The range was from two to ten staff members. The average, as shown in chapter ii, is 3.3. This average was raised by the inclusion of the loosely integrated type of parish, in which, it will be recalled, staff members are assigned to individual coöperative churches, with which their first responsibility lies, but also care for a specially assigned function for all the churches of the parish. Such parishes are to be found chiefly in the Middle Atlantic and middle-western regions. The closely integrated type of larger parish, as a rule, had a director and 1.1 staff members. Quite frequently staff members were women. Including both types, the average staff by regions was as follows:

All Regions	3.0	South	2.3
New England	3.0	Middle West	3.3
Middle Atlantic	3.7	Mountain	2.0
Far West	2.0		

[2] This is not to say that the one-man larger parish is a complete failure. In some cases it has markedly improved local situations, as compared with conditions existing before its organization.

Functions of Staff

The most numerous type of staff members, about two-thirds of the total, were assistant or associate ministers and ordained directors of religious education and other departments. This large proportion is to be accounted for, of course, by the arrangements, alluded to earlier, in the loosely integrated type of larger parish. If these parishes be eliminated, the directors of religious education are about as numerous as the assistant ministers. There follow directors of young people's work, of community service, of recreation, and a small miscellaneous number of nurses, musical directors, parish visitors and deaconesses. This enumeration does not include part-time or summer workers, of which one-man parishes also had a few.

Training of Workers

The larger parish directors had, on the average, much better professional training than the general run of rural ministers. Four-fifths of them were college graduates; three-quarters held both college and seminary degrees. All the others had attended either college or seminary for a time, even though not graduating. In its 1930 survey, covering nearly 2,500 village and open-country churches in every region of the United States, the Institute of Social and Religious Research found that barely three-tenths of the ministers were both college and seminary graduates. The 1926 *Census of Religious Bodies* discovered an even worse condition, only 22.6 per cent. of the white Protestant clergy in rural areas having both college and seminary diplomas.[3]

The staff members were not as well trained. One-fifth were college graduates only and one-fifth college and seminary graduates. Another fifth had attended college but not graduated. One-tenth had attended or graduated from Bible schools, but three-tenths had had no training beyond high school.

Qualifications of Workers

Denominational administrators sympathetic to the larger parish plan agreed fairly well on the qualifications desirable in staff members. They placed first of all an attractive personality, an ability to lead, inspire and work with people. This, if the individual was teachable, was deemed more valuable than perfect technique.

[3] On the basis of seventeen of the largest denominations. See Fry, C. Luther, *The U. S. Looks at Its Churches* (New York: Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1930), p. 148.

They demanded, of course, a religious man with an adjusted personality, a working philosophy of life and an appreciation of the spiritual and mystical elements of religion.

They asked for a person who knew the church, its organization and administration, and preferably one especially strong in religious education.

They insisted upon a "passion" for, or at least a deep interest in rural life and work, and favored a personal rural background.

They wanted individuals who could fit into the community life as leaders, especially in the civic and recreational phases. Finally, they recognized that the director of a multiple-staff parish must be not only a preacher but also an executive for an organization requiring the administration of professional and lay co-workers with a facility for handling many essential details, without allowing them to crowd out the weightier matters of the enterprise.

Salaries

The salaries paid by the larger parishes reflected sharp differences between the directors or chief ministers and their associates. This would be expected from the differences in training. There was a considerable difference between the salaries of directors of the multiple-staff parishes and the ministers of the one-man parishes. The average multiple-staff director received $1,836, the one-man parish minister $1,180, and the staff members, $1,078. In almost every case, living quarters were furnished in addition to the salary. Especially among the one-man parishes a number of salaries, notably in the Middle West, had not been paid in full on account of the depression. These figures include only actual payments received by the employee. The interesting regional differences in the larger parish salary scale are given in Table VI.

TABLE VI—AVERAGE SALARIES OF LARGER PARISH DIRECTORS AND STAFF MEMBERS

Region	One-man Parishes		Multiple-staff Parishes		
	No.	Minister	No.	Director or Chief Minister	Other Full-time Workers
All Regions	29	$1,180	38	$1,836	$1,078
New England ...	4	1,688	6	2,120	1,544
Middle Atlantic ..	3	1,933	7	1,911	1,117
Southern	2	1,400	6	1,583	894
Middle West	10	745	13	1,972	999
Mountain	5	1,203	4	1,883	——
Far West	5	1,047	2	1,590	1,290

These larger parish pastors are all resident in their fields, although on the average only half the churches in rural America are served by pastors living in the communities in which their churches are located. The average salary of rural resident pastors in 1930 was $1,600. It will be observed that, despite the depression, the 1932 compensation of the directors of the multiple-staff parishes was above this level, but that the ministers who directed larger parishes without the help of a staff were relatively poorly paid. Differences in fields, in the amount of mission-board support and in the training and experience of the two groups, account for this disparity in compensation.

Despite the low compensation, few of the larger parish staff members supplemented their incomes by other occupations, as did one-sixth of the village and more than one-third of the open-country ministers in 1930. One larger parish head directed a farm. One-tenth of the staff members and ministers of one-man parishes were carrying work on the side, but in more than half the cases this consisted of religious work outside the parish, conducted in part with the hope of eventually enlarging the parish, or as additional preparation for their responsibilities in some near-by college or theological seminary.

Tenure of Staff

Closely related to the question of compensation is that of security of tenure. In this respect the directors of multiple-staff larger parishes were quite fortunate. Their average tenure of four years, up to the time of the survey, compares with an average of 2.7 years for the general run of rural ministers. The other staff workers were less fortunate. Their average tenure up to the time of this study was 1.8 years. Short tenure in subordinate positions seems also to characterize the urban church, as has been shown by studies for the Institute of Social and Religious Research by Dr. H. Paul Douglass.

TABLE VII—TENURE OF LARGER PARISH STAFF WORKERS, IN YEARS

Region	Directors	Other Workers
All Regions	4.0 years	1.8 years
New England	6.0 "	2.3 "
Middle Atlantic	3.0 "	3.0 "
Middle West	3.5 "	1.8 "
Mountain	5.0 "	1.0 "

The regional variations in length of tenure, shown in Table VII, are interesting. The shorter periods of service in the Middle Atlantic and Middle West are directly due to the prevalence of the loosely integrated type of larger parish, largely Methodist, with the traditional turnover of ministers.

Type of Ministers

No attempt was made in this study to apply personality rating scales to larger parish staff members nor to study the social and economic backgrounds from which they had come. But the field workers had had many years of experience in studying rural churches, and their subjective judgments, made also in the light of comments by larger parish members, are probably not without significance. One such comment follows:

"X is the son of Swedish parents. He is thoroughly American, however. He shows in all his plans for the parish the spirit of allowing personal liberty to all. Hé is a man of good education, scrupulous honesty, tact and leadership, hard work. He has a rural point of view and a flexible mind and a good command of precise language. He has a better command of figures than most ministers. He worked up the financial program on the ten-year basis in a fine way, till the depression came. He has a very attractive wife who has had a three-year course in religious education at seminary, but as she has five small children she cannot be very active in the work.

"In a good many ways Mr. X is typical of most of the larger parish ministers I have interviewed on this trip, at least five of the seven others. Most are just under forty, have served in the War, are well educated, with a progressive attitude toward theology and a rural viewpoint. These men are all vigorous, honest, rural-minded and ready to adapt larger parish methods to the particular conditions of their own field. They differ greatly in degree of culture, leadership and tact. (Most of these were directors of closely integrated larger parishes.)

"Mr. Y., the associate, is an older man of geniality and sweetness of spirit. He evidently can influence both people of the high-school age and those who are older. His previous experience has been as pastor of a one-church field. That is one reason why Mr. X. put him at H—— and took the other two churches. Another reason was that he felt he was qualified himself to carry on the financial program, and thought the two smaller places were the danger points in this respect.

"The two ministers are on the best of terms. They consult, but hardly coöperate, by the plan. Mr. X. is an ideal larger parish minister; Mr. Y. by experience a village minister with a country outlook."

All the field workers were impressed with the better than average training of the larger parish ministers, especially those serving the closely

integrated type of parish and the interdenominational projects. The majority of the latter seemed to be men of superior quality, judged from any viewpoint, although a few otherwise satisfactory men had difficulty with staff members. For the most part, these ministers had won the confidence of their people and of their communities. They were leaders. Although there were also superior individuals in the loosely integrated and one-man parishes, the general average would appear to rate but a little above the general run of rural clergy. A distressingly large minority were of the go-getter types, more skilled in publicity than in achievement, more interested in their next charge than in their present one.

A majority of the larger parish ministers and staff members were enthusiastic over the possibilities of the plan, although many of the ministers, unaided by assistants, were obviously overworked and others were swinging their jobs only by the unpaid help of their wives. Skepticism as to the larger parish plan and doubts as to its efficacy were met almost entirely among the so-called staff members of the loosely integrated type of larger parishes. Here the problem of personal relations among staff members, discussed in the next chapter, was always more pressing than among the closely integrated type of parishes.

Chapter VI

FAILURES, PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

One who examined the promotional literature of the larger parish movement and was without other information in regard to it, could not but conclude that it presented the final and completely successful solution to the problems of religious organization in rural America. Indeed, it would be easily possible to select from the data already presented, and to follow, facts to substantiate the claims of this promotional literature. But this would ignore other equally obvious facts. Larger parishes succeed, but larger parishes also fail. Some of them have solid and significant achievements to their credit. In others the plan has been found to have disadvantages as well as advantages, and has brought about problems that are sometimes insoluble. It is not without significance in this connection that, more than once since this study was planned, incidents which concerned parishes that had lapsed have been used in print or on the platform to illustrate the effectiveness of larger parish work.

It will be recalled that by consulting national and state denominational and interdenominational executives, promotional literature, the files of recent surveys of the Institute of Social and Religious Research and a dozen masters' theses written since 1928, a list of 197 larger parishes was obtained. Only 117 of these replied to the preliminary questionnaire and of these thirty-five, or three-tenths, reported that with them the larger parish plan had failed. Beyond question, this fate had overtaken many, possibly all, of the eighty that did not reply. In ten cases where it was possible to check on parishes among these eighty, through other means, failure was discovered. In addition, the informants consulted gave information as to nearly two-score of larger parishes that were admitted failures and which are not included in the above figures. It seems entirely safe to state that *well over half the larger parishes organized have ended in failure.* Remembering the instance of the twenty-seven parishes (not included in the original 197) in one administrator's district that had been organized and failed (see chapter ii), and the exaggerated claim that

there were 400 larger parishes in existence (see Introduction), it appears evident that this conclusion is conservative. From the facts it would at least be arguable that from three-quarters to four-fifths of all larger parishes organized had failed.

It is, therefore, the purpose of this chapter, first, to examine the reasons for these failures, so far as they can be discovered, and the serious problems and disadvantages recognized by those concerned with larger parishes, and then to discuss the achievements and the advantages of larger parishes as they have been revealed in this survey.

Causes for Failure of Larger Parishes

Lack of sociological basis

One of the principal reasons for the lack of success of larger parishes was the failure of those planning and organizing the larger parish to take into account patent sociological considerations. The areas of the parishes conformed to no natural area of the people's interest, such as a trade area, a consolidated or centralized school district or a socially and economically homogeneous community. Sometimes the area was so large it made any sort of integration through a parish council impossible, and even greatly handicapped the service of the staff. Sometimes the area of the parish combined groups or communities that were simply not combinable. In several cases parishes attempted to include cattle- and sheep-men and farmers of the intensive type, who operated by the aid of irrigation. The traditional animosity of these two groups, with their inevitably conflicting interests, sharpened by differences over local policies, foredoomed such efforts to failure.

Similarly, agricultural and mining communities were combined in the same larger parishes, although surveys from 1915 to the study of Industrial Villages and Their Churches by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, in 1929, have shown that this combination is almost never successful, even under the old circuit system. In another instance a loosely integrated type of larger parish was spread over four communities in as many counties in an area known for the strength of its local jealousies and antagonisms. Again, a large, self-contained and homogeneous open-country area that agreed to enter a larger parish found itself included with a town in another county with which it had no connections, while nearer by was another village, not included in the parish, where the

farmers of this area shopped, sent their children to school and participated in the social life.

Possibly the ministry of religion could or should have overcome these and the other differences noted, but it did not. Other causes, such as the quality of leadership, may have entered in. But, in fact, the lay-out of these larger parishes was based on considerations of denominational administrative convenience and not upon the needs of the people and their natural communities. Indeed, in two cases plans based on proper areas properly served were rejected by administrators, who agreed to support the larger parishes only if their wishes and convenience were met.

URBAN-RURAL DIFFERENCES

Another source of difficulty was the attitude of some small city churches when combined with those of outlying villages and open-country territory. This contributed to the failure of four larger parishes. The city church objected that its pastor was giving too much time to the rural work. Its representatives abstained from attending meetings of the parish council and its members from attending church, when one of the associate pastors preached in the city.

In most of the cases cited, as well as in several others, a contributing cause of failure was that the larger parish idea was imposed from above, not developed educationally. As one layman put it, "We were commanded, not consulted."

ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES

Faulty administration, other than that already noted, of one sort or another, was also an important cause of failure. Methodists seem to have suffered more from this cause than any other denomination. A new bishop, or more often a new district superintendent, came into a supervisory relationship to a larger parish. He was not interested in or informed about the plan, its values and methods of functioning. He felt that it was taking too much money, energy or personnel. He placed the parish upon the defensive instead of giving it the moral or financial support formerly forthcoming. In such situations mistakes, dissensions or the like, were magnified and failure resulted. One bishop stated, "There are simply not enough denominational superintendents who understand and believe in the larger parish plan to make it possible to develop parishes, especially interdenominational ones."

Closely related to this difficulty was the problem of ministerial supply, again especially noticeable in the Methodist denomination, with its relatively rapid turnover of ministers. It frequently happened that a new minister, sent to the central or some other church in a larger parish, knew little or nothing of larger parish methods or philosophy. One famous larger parish, highly successful for five years, was wrecked in just this way, despite an almost ideal community set-up.

OTHER CAUSES

Those mentioned above were the chief causes of failure, but there were a few others. Persistent inability of the staff to agree brought three parishes to an untimely end. Failure to enlist lay workers was specially hard on one-man larger parishes. Continual disregard of the traditions and convictions of members of other denominations, who were in a majority, although under the leadership of one denomination, brought two other parishes to grief. Financial difficulties growing out of the depression, including the loss of home-mission aid, has ended several larger parishes and will probably account for several more deaths.

Although none of those interviewed spoke of the matter, it was a striking fact that the loosely integrated type of larger parishes made few, if any, efforts to achieve spiritual unity through a sharing of the most sacred of religious experiences, the Sacrament. Many activities were provided of a social and religious educational nature, but in this type of parish no place was found that provided a union communion service. It is not contended that the common observance of the Sacrament would of itself overcome, for instance, the lack of a proper sociological base, but it might have eased some situations. It is at least worth while to point out that in this religiously motivated enterprise that rite which is to call to remembrance the life and death of the Founder of the religion, was left out. This omission reveals how completely those who promote the loosely integrated type of larger parish regard it as a mere administrative technique, as was pointed out in chapter i.

CAUSES OF FAILURE ILLUSTRATED

To return to the more generally recognized causes of failure, it is interesting to consider a case that illustrates several of them.

One field worker arrived to study a highly recommended larger

parish just as it had been practically decided to discontinue it. In this case it was possible to determine a number of the reasons that entered into the decision.

In the first place, the area was too large. The communities included had nothing whatsoever in common. The parish had been formed by administrative fiat and its members were largely unprepared for the new régime. They complained of the amount of volunteer service asked, in order to carry the ambitious program that the staff of two were directed to initiate. A new district superintendent had been appointed who "did not believe in the larger parish plan" and who felt that this work was getting too much home-mission aid.

In this, as in most cases, more than one reason entered into the failure, and motives leading up to the final decision were mixed. But here, as in most other cases, the reasons for failure were also mistakes of denominational leaders and administrators. When the matter is considered from the point of view of the larger parish movement as a movement, this seems especially unfortunate, since it is the chief and, some would say, the only movement at present with any sense of vitality and mission in solving the rural church problem.

Problems and Disadvantages of Larger Parishes

It is not surprising to find that all of the causes of the failure of larger parishes, just discussed, appear as problems or disadvantages in the functioning of existing parishes, even in some cases as threats to their survival.

The difficulties growing out of a non-sociological area, the communities of which were held together by no tie save that of the larger parish itself, were stressed more frequently than any other problem, especially by directors of the loosely integrated type of parish. This problem was mentioned by both ministers and laymen.

Four of the parishes also complained because the plan had been handed down from the administrative heights. This weakened the sense of local responsibility. An equal number were dissatisfied with their professional leadership, its rapid turnover and the fact that new ministers were frequently unfitted by training, inclination or personality to do the community work demanded. Some, indeed, were said to be ignorant of and uninterested in rural conditions and people. Board or parish council

members frequently pointed out that it was most unwise, and indeed unfair in an experimental enterprise like a larger parish, to make its success so largely dependent on a staff that might change.

The depression and the attendant drop in financial support also presented a pressing problem to about one-sixth of the parishes. For instance, in one middle-western parish 80 per cent. of the farms were mortgaged and most of these were behind in interest payments. Practically all telephones had been disconnected, there was no money in circulation, the schools were closed and even leading members lacked clothes.

The coöperation of small city churches in larger parishes likewise was a problem, even in one case where the city church involved had drawn many of its members from the open-country area included in the parish.

Finally, staff dissensions were present and troublesome even where they had not killed the work. Members complained in one-fifth of the parishes surveyed that "team work was lacking" among staff members. This was especially true, although not always detected by members, in the loosely integrated type of parish, where men responsible first of all to a given church were loathe to accept the leadership of their colleagues from other parish churches in the particular phases of the work that each represented. Thus, in one typical case, minister A. was to be responsible for the musical work of the parish. A new staff member, Rev. B., was called to the parish. He was a talented musician and informed A. that he was not needed. A. was a hail-fellow-well-met extrovert; B. was the opposite. Bitter feeling has resulted. The parish had become a larger one in name, only, by the time of the survey. In dissensions of this kind theological differences also played their part.

Two other problems, not figuring in the reason for failure, were frequently mentioned. One was the difficulty of getting actual coöperative planning or shared thinking about the parish, as a whole, among the churches or communities of the larger parish. Each church, especially in the loosely integrated type of parish, was apt to put itself first and the parish second. The other difficulty was the familiar problem of interdenominational competition, which was often aggravated by poor handling of the situation on the part of ministers or administrators. This was especially so in several cases where the larger parish met competition in each of its centers and where it had been organized specifically to hold the field for a given denomination.

A CASE OF FRICTION

A field worker arrived at one larger parish just after an experimental period had ended and the people had voted to go on with the parish. And yet all was obviously not well. The director of the parish called an informal conference for a frank discussion of the matter. In it a curious medley of minor irritations, quite human, rose to the surface. Some people felt they had not received enough pastoral attention—a plaint by no means peculiar to larger parishes. Many did not appreciate the specialized service of the director of religious education. They only knew that he preached seldom and not as well as *"the* preacher"; that he wasted much time on programs and activities when he might be calling on the sick or leading inspirational prayer meetings for "the two or three gathered together" for such events.

While few larger parishes studied had as good a program of group and intercommunity meetings, the smaller centers resented the fact that all the staff lived at the parish center. This added to smoldering difficulties between town and country. It developed that the staff members insisted on bathrooms in their homes, and no houses with this convenience were available outside the central community. Hence they settled there. Here was a choice morsel of criticism to be used by those who had no bathrooms in their own homes, but who "were as good as anybody."

There was trouble, too, over finances. Here, as elsewhere, it was not recognized that, whether successful or not, the larger parish costs more dollars than does an ineffective, part-time ministry. "Specialists" cost money. Their methods may be the best but the bill is always higher. There is always the hope that better service will produce more support—the familiar "priming the pump" theory of some specialists in ending depressions—but that does not always happen or produce a sufficient volume. Despite two downward revisions of the salary scale of this parish, it still seemed high "in view of the depression."

Now all this sounds like relaying familiar "parish gossip," but gossip is often the court of final appeal in village affairs, religious as well as others. The point is that in an experiment like the larger parish, especially when its organization, as in this case, was for a trial period, all eyes are upon the staff. Each fancied slight, each unrealized mistake is carefully stowed away in memory's arsenal for future sniping operations.

Comparisons are constantly made with the past. The ghost of this past, soon idealized beyond all ghostly tradition, stalks through the remotest neighborhood of the parish in the person of every pastorally neglected medium of pious gossip, every soul that does not understand the "high fallutin" methods of modern specialists in religious organization. The point is that the larger parish system adjusts nothing automatically. Thus far its success depends, to a considerably greater degree than is the case in the traditional parish, upon the personality of the staff and their skill in handling their members.

DISADVANTAGES TO BE FACED

The reasons for the failures of larger parishes and the list of problems faced by others still functioning, often successfully, point then to several considerations that should be frankly faced by the proponents and administrators of larger parishes.

The first of these has just been stated: the inevitably critical attitude of many toward a new plan.

There is, secondly, a very real danger, frequently illustrated, in fact, in the parishes studied, that a program will be undertaken that is beyond the resources of the enterprise in leadership and funds.

This tends, in the third place, to make the minister what one parishioner called "a chore boy for church and community." He becomes more of the executive, less of the pastor and friend.

Again, the plan is expensive and as yet too dependent upon home-mission aid. The per capita giving in larger parishes, perhaps because of the depression, is barely up to the 1930 average for all rural churches.

Finally, there is the danger that making the wheels go round will be confused with religious progress, increased activities with spiritual effectiveness; in short, the ever-present danger of institutions, that they may live for their own sake and not for their objectives. In the main, larger parishes are probably freer, especially from the last difficulty, than is the average church. At the same time, because of the very youth of the movement and the enthusiasm felt for it in some quarters, the discovered presence of all of these dangers or disadvantages needs to be stressed.

Achievements of Larger Parishes

Enough attention has been given to the failures, problems and dangers of larger parish organization. There is also a brighter side. The follow-

ing sections deal, therefore, with the achievements and advantages of larger parishes, with, however, a word of caution to the reader to remember still that from one-half to four-fifths of the attempted larger parishes have failed. Since the conclusion of the field work of this study, three of the parishes surveyed, practically one in nine, have been given up. The continuance of two more is very doubtful, and these five include two whose excellent statistical progress helped materially in the records given below.

It should also be remembered that larger parishes must be judged in the light of the exceptionally difficult situations under which many of them operate, some of which were noted in the discussion of problems given above. The larger parish plan has frequently been tried when all else had failed. As nearly as could be determined, one-sixth of the churches now included in the larger parishes studied were closed prior to the organization of the larger parish, nearly one-third were declining, and almost two-fifths were standing still.

NEW ACTIVITIES

Larger parishes to which the first brief explanatory questionnaire alluded to in the introduction was sent, were asked to list gains or activities that would not have been possible without the larger parish organization. Of course, the parish directors answered this question and no field check-up was possible in two-thirds of the cases, but the list given in Table VIII is none-the-less significant.

TABLE VIII—GAINS IN EIGHTY-FOUR LARGER PARISHES ATTRIBUTED TO LARGER PARISH ORGANIZATION

Item	Number of Times Mentioned
More effective religious education	24
More effective young people's work	19
Daily vacation Bible school	17
Expanded social, recreational and community service program	17
More and better services of worship	8
Better evangelism	8
Teacher or leadership training	8
Social services, health and medical service	7
Better music	6
Week-day religious education in public schools	6
Boy and girl scouts	6
More pastoral care	5
Summer camps for all age- and sex-groups	4
Parish paper	4
Better service to farmers	2
Better all-round program	2

MEMBERSHIP GAINS

The organization of larger parishes had brought sharp increases in church-membership. This is the more significant because church rolls were at a standstill or worse in the areas of many of these parishes prior to their organization. The results on this point are summarized in the following tabulation:[1]

	Number of Parishes	Average Membership Prior to Organization	1933	Rate of Gain
Multiple-staff Parishes	37	208	328	57.7%
One-man Parishes	29	118	173	46.6%

These gains held for all regions without much variation in rate. They were not due to growth of population. Indeed, one-fourth of the larger parish areas were losing population and another one-fourth were reported as stationary. The gains of the remainder, largely due to the urban-rural migration, stimulated by the depression, attained no such proportions as the membership gains.

HIGH PROPORTION OF ACTIVE MEMBERS

These larger parishes have also scored a distinct achievement in the high proportion of their membership which is active. In the larger parishes more than four-fifths of the members are active, the exact figures being 84.0 per cent. for the parishes surveyed and 79.3 per cent. for those replying by questionnaire. Inactives in the two groups were 6.0 and 8.5 per cent. respectively, and non-residents 10.0 and 12.2 per cent. In no region of either sample did the inactives exceed one in nine of the total membership, and in only the parishes of the mountain states was the average for both samples about 8 per cent. In this respect the record of the multiple-staff parishes was several points better than that of the one-man group.[2]

[1] It should be noted that these data are not distributed by number of years since organization, because of the smallness of the total sample. This distorts the results for the multiple-staff parishes, a number of which were rather recently organized. If the sample of parishes studied by questionnaire only are considered, the rate of gain of the multiple-staff parishes is about twice that of the one-man parishes. Similar results are obtained if only those parishes organized prior to 1931 are considered.

[2] The good record made by the larger parishes in the average membership and average gain of their Sunday schools has already been noted in chapter iv. The usual proportion of active members in rural churches of the United States is 68.5 per cent. Eighteen and five-tenths per cent. are inactive members—those carried on the roll although they have ceased to contribute or attend. Non-resident members make up the rest, 13 per cent.

ATTENDANCE

The attendance records of the larger parish Sunday schools were reported in chapter iv as about normal. Per member attendance at services of worship is only about one-third as good as the average for rural churches, being about one and one-fourth times a month. This is due in part to the wide areas covered by some of these parishes; to the fact that many of them were located in areas where the church-going tradition had disappeared, as in some sections of the mountain and Pacific Coast states; and to the fact that many of them had been formed in communities where the churches had been very weak before the organization of the larger parish. The other side of this picture is to be found in the fact that in three-quarters, both of the central churches and of the others, attendance was better in the first half of 1933 than during the year 1930. In only one parish in thirteen was it lower, and most of these had lost in population.

TRANSPORTATION

The parishes were working at the problem of church attendance and in a number of instances were furnishing transportation to members. Usually this was limited to people without cars, although with the need for strict economy on the part of so many, this limitation was not always insisted on. Usually the buses of the school district were hired for the purpose, but in some places a volunteer automobile transport service was organized.

GAINS IN SUBSIDIARY ORGANIZATIONS

The number of subsidiary organizations in the larger parishes greatly increased after the inception of the plan. The number of Ladies' Aid societies, for instance, almost doubled, so that every parish had at least one. Membership of those previously organized gained 40 per cent. Missionary societies tripled. There was a six-fold increase in young people's societies of the Christian Endeavor type and a seven-fold increase in scout troops.

SPECIFIC INSTANCES OF LARGER PARISH RESULTS

But the full story of larger parish achievements cannot be told by statistics alone. Numerous incidents gathered in the course of the field survey give a flesh and blood picture of some of the happenings. Up to

the time of writing, the parishes from whose experiences these incidents are taken were still functioning.

One parish was formed in an eastern county in that fourth of its area where the soil is distinctly below average. The conditions more closely resemble those of the Appalachian Highlands than they do most of the East. There were four small centers in this area with six churches, some dead when the parish, an interdenominational one, was organized. In one of the centers the two struggling churches federated. In another an abandoned church was reopened and reconditioned. A rather extensive program was soon under way. The extent to which organized religion had lapsed in this area is shown by the fact that of the 216 pupils in the public schools, 130, or 60 per cent., had never attended any church or Sunday school up to the opening of the parish. Many of these are now enrolled and there is an active young people's club with a membership of thirty-five.

Everywhere the larger parishes seemed to appeal to young people. In one parish there were nearly three times as many young people active in clubs and church schools as were then enrolled on the church-membership lists. With variations, this story was repeated again and again. The means for producing these results have been described in chapters iii and iv. In brief, the young people were responding to the program and the leadership of the staff members.

EVIDENCE FROM THE PEW

Larger parish members catalogued many good results of their local enterprises. Said one, "The churches are decidedly stronger. There is less friction among them and hardly any petty bickering within them, such as some churches sometimes seem to enjoy." Many reported the awakening and growth of community-mindedness, although this was not found where the staff were concerned only with a denominational program. "Summer slumps have ceased," several reported. More than one treasurer said with relief, "We're operating on a business basis, which the churches hereabouts have never done before."

Reason for Larger Parish Success

Perhaps one-third of the larger parishes studied might be called really and outstandingly successful, a majority of them of the closely integrated type. What were the reasons for such success? Obviously no one cause

could explain any given case. Various combinations of the reasons for success, enumerated below, were present.

1. The larger parish boundaries included an area the people of which were held together by other social and often economic ties.
2. The larger parish was organized as a result of the desires of the people themselves. It was an indigenous not a superimposed development.
3. The staff members were well trained, high-grade, rurally minded individuals.
4. The parish had either the sole responsibility for the Protestants of its area or at least it enjoyed cordially coöperative relations with churches of other denominations.
5. The program was flexible, fitted to the needs of the people and their community, not standardized. It could be changed as needs changed.
6. The organization was well integrated, even though of the loosely integrated type of larger parish.
7. The parish had won the confidence and hence the leadership of its community.
8. The program of the parish met felt needs and hence enlisted the support of the community in both service and funds.
9. The parish was constantly in touch with its members and community through pastoral work and annual surveys.
10. The area served was populous enough and wealthy enough to support the work in normal times. It was not too large to be unwieldy.
11. There was harmony among the staff members.
12. The staff tenure was of above average length.
13. There was continued intelligent denominational support, moral or financial or both, by overhead administrators.

Larger Parish Advantages

With the evidence as to the failures, problems, mistakes, successes and achievements of the larger parishes before us, it is pertinent to enquire what the advantages of the plan are. The theoretical advantages are many and are stated with eloquence in the promotional literature of the movement that is issued from denominational headquarters and by some larger parish directors. But as one national home-mission executive wrote in a moment of unwonted candor, "Unfortunately these theoretical advantages often do not materialize in practice." None would guess that this was the case from the articles and speeches on the subject which this executive has produced.

But this study does indicate some definite advantages, given proper conditions.

1. Where the conditions for success noted above, or a majority of them, have been met, the larger parish plan is a helpful and practical solution for many rural church problems, more practical indeed than many others. The qualification is important. To attempt a larger parish plan under conditions that all but foredoom it to failure is no advantage to any person or parish.

2. The larger parish, when not handicapped by unsolvable competition, can minister more effectively to all the people of an area as people, regardless of denominational ties, than can the average rural church. The ministries of religion can be carried to remote parts of a community that otherwise might not be able to afford them.

3. The plan presents a way, if overhead administrators are permanently agreed, to increase the efficiency of interdenominational coöperation on the community level.

4. The pooling of the religious resources of a sociologically homogeneous area make possible specialized and better trained leadership, just as the centralization of schools in a similar area offers better educational leadership.

5. Similarly, a wider, more diversified program, fitting all age-groups, and more important and interesting projects are possible than under traditional conditions.

6. A bona-fide larger parish can and usually does improve community spirit.

7. It can also afford worthwhile opportunities for developing leadership and other abilities and for self-expression on the part of the members.

8. A real larger parish offers a far more satisfying job to a minister than is obtainable in the average rural church circuit or in the average competitive village church situation.

These advantages, it should be emphasized, are by no means automatic. They inhere not in a name but in the proper sort of situation. The list omits a dozen advantages claimed by various proponents of the larger parish plan, because these advantages were not evident in the larger parishes studied, and the number of these, adding those that submitted a complete questionnaire reply to those visited by field workers, includes four-fifths of all the functioning larger parishes that could be discovered.

Criteria for Judging a Larger Parish

As stated in chapter i, there is nothing to prevent the application of the term larger parish to any piece of rural church work. In practice the larger parishes vary quite as much in form and functioning as do consolidated or centralized schools, although the percentage of failure among the parishes is infinitely larger than among the schools. It is this fact that

is bringing the larger parish into disrepute among some people and that may finally discredit the term and perhaps prejudice a technique that does offer some hope for religious organization in rural America. It would certainly be desirable to distinguish clearly between the one-man and multiple-staff parishes and between the closely and loosely integrated types.

Even better would be an attempt by the interested denominations to agree upon and adhere to a more vigorous definition of what a larger parish is. This would not only help the movement; it would also be of value in arranging comity agreements. As it is now, if a denomination accepts an allocation of sole responsibility for an area, on condition that it serve it by a larger parish, the denominations relinquishing their interests in such an area may well ask, "What do you mean by a larger parish?" Indeed, failure to understand one another on this point has voided at least one or two comity agreements and added to the lengthy list of larger parishes that have failed.

In view of these and other considerations previously mentioned, an attempt is made below to list certain criteria by which it can be judged whether a given project is or is not a larger parish, or at least by which such a project can be readily assigned to its proper category among the main types of larger parishes. These criteria are proposed in the light of the advantages claimed for larger parishes by their proponents, and in the light of the causes of failure and the reasons for success of the larger parishes studied in this survey. This being so, there is some unavoidable repetition between these criteria and the previous discussion of the factors alluded to, from which they are built.

It is proposed, then, that a larger parish should meet the following criteria and should measure up to the following standards accepted in the literature and in the experience of successfully functioning larger parishes:

1. The territory included is an economic and/or social unit.
2. The territory has adequate resources, under normal economic conditions, sooner or later to support the larger parish.
3. The churches of the parish combine their finances, at least as regards the salary of the staff and preferably for all items.
4. The staff consists of two or more persons with special training or interest in the field of responsibility to which each is assigned.[8]
5. There is a functioning parish council.

[8] It is recognized that some one-man larger parishes can, and do, make such efficient use of competent volunteers as to qualify under this head.

6. The parish gives, or at least sincerely aims to give, many-sided service to the whole territory it serves and to every person within it.

7. The parish has exclusive possession of its field so far as Protestant work is concerned or at least has coöperative relations with other religious groups and with community organizations.

8. The parish recognizes its interdenominational obligations.

9. The parish is assured of the continued support of the denomination or denominations concerned regardless of changes in administrative personnel.

It is recognized that the rigorous application of these criteria would eliminate from the list of larger parishes about one-half of those studied. It would also have eliminated about four-fifths of the failures now charged to the larger parish movement. These criteria will not be popular with those who do not qualify under them, but in view of the facts the burden of proof rests on them.

What of the Future?

If the criteria suggested were generally adopted, the larger parish movement would probably have a slow but steady and enduring growth. Many other parishes would be influenced by its achievements and so far as conditions warranted would doubtless adopt this or that characteristic of its program. But with conditions as they are, with the publicity and financial advantages that go with the adoption of the term, and especially with the continuing and discouraging disregard of every sociological consideration by so many overhead administrators of larger parishes, the future is difficult to read.

For the larger parish movement, in certain places and to some extent in general, has placed denominationalism on the defensive. That may be one reason why, perhaps subconsciously, some denominational executives are so anxious to appropriate the term and, having done so, to prostitute it to their own purposes. In effect, some of those interviewed admitted the soft impeachment. For the rural job of many such an executive is to save a whole series of dying churches, for his denomination first, rather than for society. When there comes some one with a spark of contagious personality, a burning interest in human beings and their needs rather than in denominational yearbooks, a program which entices the young, which relates religion and life and ensures fellowship in tasks that appear worth doing, because geared to recognized personal and community needs, the resulting transformation of the socio-religious life

makes the former denominational program seem more than ordinarily feeble and the people more than "critical" of it.

This has happened in some of the places studied. The staff, mostly twenty-five to forty years of age, have a blazing enthusiasm for their conception of the larger parish movement, such as similar pioneers had a decade or two ago for the community church. The hope and future of the movement lies in part with such men and women. The rural church situation has been difficult for thirty years. It is worse now because of the depression. Some great stimulus toward adequate service on a reorganized basis would help. The larger parish may furnish it if freed of the handicaps already discussed, so many of which are removable but so few of which have been removed.

There were indisputable instances in this study where administrators and staff members chose to sabotage or kill the plan rather than carry out the program, apparently because it conflicted with their concepts of denominational religion, which, however, many of the people in these parishes, especially the younger people, no longer held. If this continues, the movement is doomed. Denominational institutionalism is still too strong a Goliath for such an infant David.

Again the movement, if it is to grow, having better perfected its philosophy, must secure the means of training directors and staff members for its work. Few courses on larger parish techniques are as yet given even in the relatively small number of theological seminaries that have courses in rural church work. Unless ministerial and supervisory leadership are wise and fully in sympathy with larger parish principles, any given example tends to revert to the accepted forms of rural church work, the village church with perhaps an out appointment and the open-country circuit. This wisdom and sympathy can be obtained only by education, including in that term, demonstration.

The facts as to the parts, good and bad, that supervisory officials have played thus far in the larger parish movement, raise anew certain considerations stressed previously in studies by the Institute of Social and Religious Research and by some educational institutions. The responsibilities of the administrator in our present changing society are not simply to keep benevolences rolling in, to secure ministers, to compile records for yearbooks and to confer. To these should now be added functional and educational supervisory responsibilities. These are shunned by most of the present denominational executives, either because they are in-

competent to fulfill or even to see them, or because they are too immersed in the accepted routine of their office. That this is so is a tremendous handicap to a new and still experimental movement like the larger parish. On the other hand, it is in part because some denominational administrators do realize the fact and are alert to sociological considerations, that the larger parish has been able to get as far as it has.

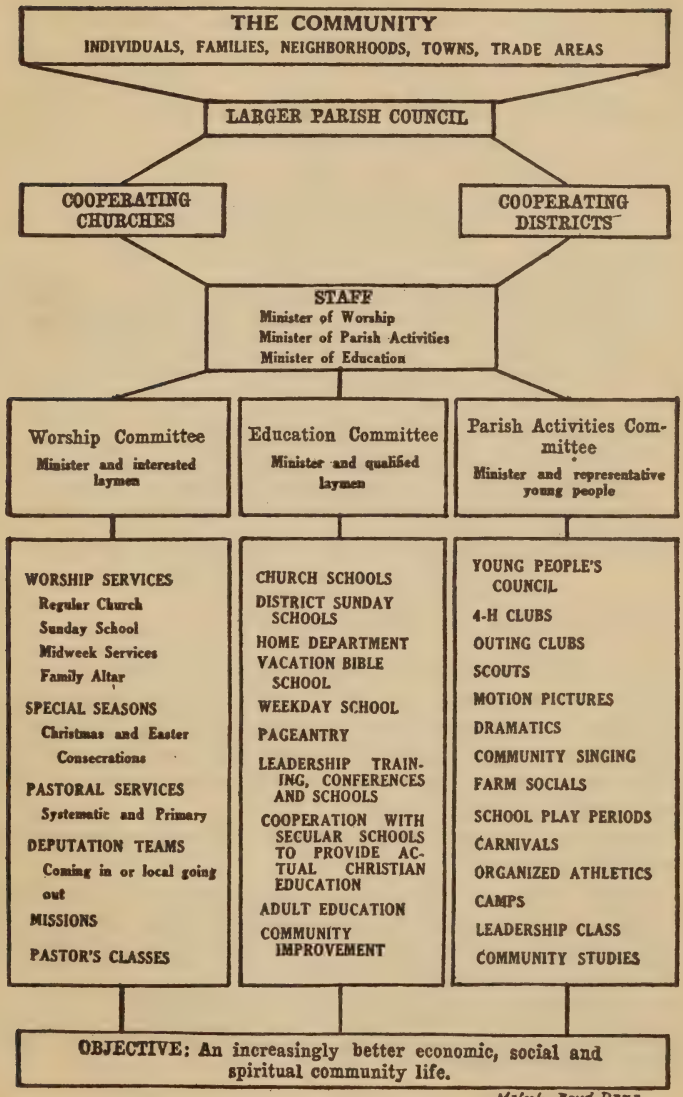
The rural church in the United States could benefit by the impetus and the hope of a new idea. At present the larger parish plan is the only such idea on the horizon. But the larger parish movement is in a state of unstable equilibrium. It has failed so often in one large denomination as to be coming into ill-repute, although such failure was invited. It has succeeded so often as to offer real hope in a discouraging field of religious effort. In this chapter the attempt has been made to give a statement of the conditions under which the movement in its local expressions has often succeeded. But such knowledge insures nothing unless it is applied, and the handicaps to applying it are great. The future of the larger parish movement is as yet uncertain. It is indeed an enthusiasm more than a movement; but the proper sort of enthusiasm, if it faces and uses the facts, and is linked to social intelligence and knowledge, may set in motion a larger parish movement that will realize the potential contribution of the idea to the religious life of rural America.

APPENDICES

A

CHART OF A LARGER PARISH

By Malcolm Boyd Dana



B

CONSTITUTIONS AND BY-LAWS OF LARGER PARISHES

I

Constitution and By-Laws of the Rochester and Lakeville Larger Parish

PREAMBLE:

Believing that friendly coöperation in religious and social welfare work helps to develop community life and a spirit of good fellowship, and that it makes possible a program of Christian activities so comprehensive as to be of vital importance to the Kingdom of God, we, the following organizations, namely:

The East Rochester Congregational Church
The Grove Chapel Congregational Church
The North Rochester Congregational Church
The Lakeville and Taunton Precinct Congregational Church

do hereby pledge our loyal support to the following

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

1. NAME This organization shall be known as

The Rochester and Lakeville Larger Parish

2. OBJECT Its object shall be to promote the religious, moral and social welfare of the Larger Parish and for the advancement of God's Kingdom by correlating the various activities of the above-mentioned Churches, and such other Churches, religious bodies and social welfare agencies as may be admitted from time to time.

Any other religious group may be received, upon the unanimous vote of the Larger Parish Council.

3. COUNCIL There shall be a Larger Parish Council which shall be the executive body of the Larger Parish and made up of three delegates from each constituent member, and not more than three members at large, elected by the Council, as needed each year.

Its membership shall not be limited to Church members.

The staff workers shall be members of the Council, but with no voting power as to their status or salary.

Meetings The Council shall hold regular monthly meetings, and special meetings at the call of the Chairman, or of five Council members. A majority shall constitute a quorum.

Each Council member shall serve three years, except the first councilors, one-third of whom shall serve for one year, and one-third for two years.

No Council member shall serve more than two successive terms without an interim of one year.

The Council shall elect a Chairman, who shall act as the official head of the Larger Parish, a Vice-chairman, a Secretary and a Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall furnish suitable bonds, if deemed advisable by the Council. The Council shall provide for the proper auditing of all accounts.

All these officers shall act in the same capacity as officers of the Larger Parish.

Duties The Council shall employ a staff of workers, subject to the previous approval of the majority of the uniting Churches. The staff shall be responsible to the Council. The Council shall raise the Larger Parish budget, and attend to all matters affecting the Larger Parish.

4. STAFF WORKERS It shall be the aim of the Parish to maintain a multiple ministry, consisting of a Pastor and a Director of Religious Education and Parish Activities, who shall also be Associate Pastor. The Pastor shall have charge primarily of the preaching and public worship, the Director of Religious Education and Parish Activities shall be chiefly responsible for the work of religious education, through Sunday schools, Bible classes and kindred agencies. The social director shall develop the recreational side of the community life, arranging for entertainments, social gatherings and various kinds of outdoor and indoor activities as the Council may direct.

Another Associate Pastor may be added to the staff, as may be necessary.

5. MEETINGS (a) The Secretary of the Council shall call an Annual Meeting of the Larger Parish, to be held on or near the first of April, at which time the Council shall make its report, plans for the ensuing year be discussed, and other business of a general character be transacted. (b) No business shall be transacted by the Council, until its membership is completed and its officers elected.

6. It is understood that the income of invested funds to be expended in the respective parishes for which the fund was given, shall be expended for the benefit of that parish and may be contributed to the support of the ministers of the Larger Parish for work done in that (local) parish.

Budget Each Constituent Member of the Larger Parish shall be responsible for a certain definite amount as its quota, for the support of the Larger Parish, to be determined by the Council, and each Church shall pay to the Treasurer of the Larger Parish its designated quota, according to its ability.

Relation to the Constituent Organizations Each religious organization included in the Larger Parish shall maintain its independence in matters pertain-

ing to its own internal affairs. It shall retain its own trust funds, its own buildings and may contribute to the benevolences of its own denomination, as its members desire. Each organization's connection with the Larger Parish shall be voluntary, and any constituent member may withdraw from the Parish at the time of the Annual Meeting, provided that notice of such intention has been given to the Council six months in advance.

7. AMENDMENTS to the Constitution may be proposed at any regular meeting of the Council. Notice of such proposal shall thereupon be given to the Constituent Members by the Secretary of the Council. Upon a majority vote of the constituent members the amendment shall go into effect.

BY-LAWS

1. ORGANIZATION That members of the immediate families of the Staff members if actively engaged in Larger Parish work, may be invited by the Council to become members of the Staff.

That members of the Staff shall meet twice a month for the purpose of coördinating the activities in their respective fields. Reports of all committee meetings and of plans being formulated shall be presented at each of these meetings.

2. THE COUNCIL That directly following each Council meeting, the Pastors shall notify the chairmen of their respective committees regarding any action by the Council which may affect those committees and shall arrange to have the other members of the committee notified also.

That following each Council meeting, staff members shall prepare a brief report of it, covering all important points and take advantage of every opportunity to read that report at meetings which they may attend within the Larger Parish.

Before the close of each Council Meeting the Council may go into Executive Session, at which the Pastors shall not be present, unless invited.

That regular meetings of the Council be held on the second Wednesday of each month.

3. COMMITTEES Meetings of committees within the Larger Parish shall be called only by the committee chairman or by a member authorized by that chairman. No one except duly elected members shall attend committee meetings unless invited by the chairman. Guests may take part in the discussion, if invited to do so by the chairman, but under no condition shall voting privileges be extended.

Notification of meetings shall be sent to each member at least two days (48 hours) in advance. An emergency meeting may be held without two days' notice, but no action taken shall be official until it has been approved by a majority of all the members.

The Pastor and the Associate Pastor shall be voting members of all com-

mittees having to do with activities of which they have charge, respectively, and advisory members, without voting privileges, of all other committees.

4. PUBLICITY That arrangements be made with one of the New Bedford newspapers to contribute a definite space and location in certain issues to announcements concerning the Rochester and Lakeville Larger Parish, and that some one person be delegated to regularly furnish the appropriate announcements regarding functions of the Larger Parish and its member parishes. That such paper be accepted as the official newspaper of the Larger Parish and the parishioners be urged to subscribe to it.

The Staff shall prepare complete data for a Calendar of Larger Parish regular activities, in clear, organized and written form, ready for printing, the Calendar to include all available information regarding the Staff, the regular meeting days or dates and places of all regular religious, social and other functions, including committee meetings in the Larger Parish and the local parishes, together with the names and addresses and telephone numbers of all committee chairmen and members.

5. FINANCES That the Council encourage and authorize Larger Parish functions only to an extent which shall not discourage the separate parishes from holding local parish social functions, as they may be desired or needed to raise funds.

That Larger Parish functions, under the direction of the Council and Larger Parish committees shall be planned with the greatest possible care in an effort to establish and maintain a high standard of quality to build an attractive reputation for all Larger Parish functions.

That funds derived from Larger Parish functions shall be turned over to the Treasurer of the Larger Parish, together with a written accounting of the costs and receipts of the function by the Treasurer of the Committee in charge, who shall in turn receive from the Treasurer a receipt for the amount. That local parishes be urged to announce the purpose for which funds raised at local functions are to be used.

6. AMENDMENTS These By-laws may be suspended or amended or added to at any meeting of the Council by a two-thirds vote of those present.

II

Constitution of the Marcus Whitman Larger Parish

Article I—Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be The Marcus Whitman Larger Parish.

Section 2. The delegated body, hereinafter provided for, shall be known as the Staff of the Larger Parish.

Section 3. The administrative body, hereinafter provided for, shall be known as the Staff of the Larger Parish.

Article II—Purpose

The purpose of this organization shall be the coördination of the churches in the promotion of the Kingdom of God through better methods of evangelism, religious education, worship, community service, and business administration.

Article III—Membership

Section 1. The members of the Larger Parish shall be the Methodist Episcopal Churches of Rushville, Gorham, Stanley, Middlesex, Vine Valley, Potter, Friend, Yatesville and Italy Valley, and churches of other Denominations within this territory desiring to unite, which approve of this constitution and elect representatives to serve on the Council.

Section 2. Members of the Larger Parish, at any time, may decide to refrain from coöperation on any project proposed by the Council members of the Staff without jeopardizing their favor in the sight of the other members of the Council.

(Obviously, those NOT coöperating would be the losers.)

Article IV—Council

The churches uniting in the work of the Larger Parish shall act through a Council which shall consist of the pastor and six delegates from each church, irrespective of membership and size, chosen as follows:

1. The Church School Superintendent.
2. The Superintendent of the Junior Department of each Church School, or her equivalent, to represent the children's work of the Larger Parish.
3. A Youth, between the ages of 18 and 25, to represent the young people of the Larger Parish.
4. A Woman to represent the Ladies' Aid, or kindred Ladies' organization, of each Church.
5. A member of the Governing Body of the Church. (Trustee, Steward, Deacon, Elder, etc.)
6. One Member or Delegate at Large.

Article V—Staff

Section 1. The Staff shall comprise the pastors of the coöperating churches and any other person who may be employed by the Council for any special task.

Section 2. The Staff shall be the administrative unit of the Larger Parish to promote and direct the various projects which the Council shall launch.

Section 3. The Staff may assign its members to various departments of activity for the efficient direction of the projects of the Larger Parish.

Article VI—Officers

Section 1. The officers of the Larger Parish shall consist of a Director, Secretary and Treasurer, and such other officers as the Staff shall consider necessary.

Section 2. All officers, except those of special committees, shall be elected annually by a majority vote of the Council members present at the annual meeting in November.

Article VII—Meetings

Section 1. There shall be a monthly meeting of the Council, with the exception of July and August, at such time and place and of such character as it desires. A special meeting may be called by the Director at the request of any charge of the Larger Parish.

Section 2. The Staff shall meet at its own discretion or on call of the Director.

Article VIII—Finances

All moneys involved in projects which are promoted by the Council shall be handled by the Treasurer of the Larger Parish or an Assistant Treasurer elected to handle special funds; and all bills shall be ordered paid by a vote of the Council.

Article IX—Amendments

Amendments to the constitution may be proposed by a majority vote of the members of the Council present, to become effective only when approved by two-thirds of the Churches of the Larger Parish.

Article X—Adoption

That this Constitution shall become the Constitution of the Larger Parish Council when voted upon by the Council, and confirmed by the Quarterly Conferences of the coöperative churches.

III

Revised Constitution of the Southwest Harbor-Tremont Larger Parish

Adopted March 16, 1931

FOREWORD

It is felt that the moral and religious welfare of our several communities may be wisely served by a plan already in successful operation in many parts of the country and known as a Larger Parish.

Such an organization does not contemplate any decrease of loyalty to existing churches and the various denominational affiliations, or to any scheme of social service, but proposes to coördinate these agencies, and to unite the entire community for the good of all.

It recognizes that much effort and money are wasted on separate and devisive undertakings, that meagre salaries must be paid in small villages, and that a small fraction of the population is practically concerned with movements for the general good. Both economy and efficiency depend on a more comprehensive unity, which shall be more representative of a general responsibility for the welfare of the town.

Our fortunate surroundings of natural beauty ought to be matched by an even finer public spirit, both in permanent residents, and in summer visitors. Our associated villages ought to illustrate, in the conduct of their affairs, the principle which Jesus Christ laid down in His great words: "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." The self-respect of each citizen should be found in this for all.

For this high purpose the best means immediately offered is through the creation of a Larger Parish. It is not to be anticipated that such an organization can be born full grown. It must begin where we are, with the agencies at our command. "It must be directed with patience and saved by hope." It may be reassuring, however, to know that such a form of organization has been successfully developed elsewhere, and may, with proper modifications, be adapted to the conditions of our community. For this purpose the following Constitution and By-laws have been adopted.

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

Believing that friendly coöperation in religious and social welfare work tends to avoid duplication and unnecessary waste, that it helps to develop community life and a spirit of good fellowship, and that it makes possible a program of Christian activities so comprehensive as to be of vital importance to the Kingdom of God, we the undersigned regularly elected representatives of our respective Churches and Societies do hereby pledge on behalf of said churches and societies loyal support to the following constitution:

Article 1. NAME—This organization shall be known as the SOUTHWEST HARBOR-TREMONT LARGER PARISH.

Article 2. OBJECT—Its object shall be to promote the social, moral, and religious welfare of the district by uniting in one organization the various activities of the

Methodist Episcopal Church of Southwest Harbor
Congregational Church of Southwest Harbor
Baptist Church of Manset
Methodist Society of Manset
Congregational Society of McKinley

Congregational Church of Tremont
Methodist Episcopal Church of West Tremont
Baptist Church of Seal Cove
Methodist Society of Hall Quarry

and such other Churches as may be admitted from time to time by vote of the Council.

Article 3. MEMBERSHIP—All persons holding membership in the affiliated churches of the district automatically become members of the organization, and in the future all who remain in the district for at least two months and contribute to the support of the Larger Parish shall be considered members and entitled to the privilege of voting.

Article 4. THE COUNCIL AND ITS ORGANIZATION:

Section 1. *The Councillors*—There shall be a Parish Council made up of two Councillors from each of the following Churches and Church Groups: Southwest Harbor Congregation Church, Southwest Harbor M. E. Church, Manset Baptist Church, Manset M. E. Society, Tremont Congregational Church, McKinley Congregational Society, W. Tremont M. E. Church, Seal Cove Baptist Church, Hall Quarry M. E. Society, and from any other Church Groups that may be admitted from time to time. Six Councillors shall be elected from summer or winter residents of the area by the regularly appointed Councillors of the above Churches and Church Groups. It is recommended that an even proportion between men and women serving on the Council be maintained.

Section 2. *Term of Office*—Each Council member shall serve two years, except the first Councillors, half of whom shall be elected for one year. No Council member shall serve more than two successive terms.

Section 3. *Officers of the Council*—The officers of the Council shall be a Chairman, who shall act as official head of the Larger Parish, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and an Auditor who shall audit at the end of the year all records directly related to the Larger Parish and the individual Churches. The auditor shall be elected . . . from the membership of the Larger Parish.

Section 4. *Duties of the Council:*

Item 1. The Council shall hold regular monthly meetings. Special meetings can be held at the call of the Chairman. The quorum shall consist of nine Councillors, exclusive of the Staff members. The Council shall keep an accurate account of its proceedings.

Item 2. The Council shall employ a Staff of workers, chosen in harmony with the polity of the denomination to which they belong, who shall be responsible to the Council.

Item 3. The Council shall raise the Parish Budget, and attend to all matters affecting the Parish as a whole.

Item 4. The Council shall appoint committees and provide for such activities as will most effectively carry out the purpose of the Parish.

Item 5. The Council shall present an annual statement to the Parish, giving a full report of each year's work, and send a copy of the report to each clerk of each Church Group of the Parish by January first of each year.

Item 6. The Council shall hold an annual meeting the third Wednesday in January of each year. At this meeting the officers for the ensuing year and those Councillors who are to represent the Parish at large shall be elected; recommendations or suggestions from the various Church Groups shall be considered; plans for the ensuing year shall be discussed; and such other business as the Council may have before it shall be attended to. No business shall be transacted by the Council until its membership is completed and its officers elected.

Item 7. The Council shall endeavor to maintain continuous coöperation with the denominational agencies interested in the Churches of the Parish.

Article 5. THE STAFF WORKERS:

Section 1. *Number of Staff and Division of Work*—It should be the aim of the Parish to maintain a multiple ministry consisting of two co-pastors and a director of religious education. Until such time when the third worker can be secured, one of the Staff shall be the Staff Director and Pastor, having charge primarily of the pastoral duties, preaching, public worship, and being responsible for the carrying on of the parish program as a whole. The other member of the Staff shall be chiefly responsible for the work of Religious Education through the Sunday schools, Bible classes, and kindred agencies, and for the Young People's Program and Work. He shall also assist in preaching and conducting public worship services when needed. When the third Staff member is secured the work may be divided to the satisfaction of the Staff and Council.

Section 2. *Voting Privileges*—The members of the Staff are voting members of the Council except in matters pertaining to themselves.

Article 6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCHES AND CHURCH GROUPS:

Section 1. *Annual Meetings*—Each Church and Church Group shall hold an annual meeting on some convenient date between January first and the third Wednesday of each year to transact the following business, and any other business the Churches and Church Groups may have:

Item 1. They shall act upon the annual report that is to be submitted by the Parish Council to each Church and Church Group by January first of each year, and report their action to the Council at its annual meeting.

Item 2. They shall elect a Councillor to fill the expired term of the Councillor representing them. At least one of the two Councillors from each Church and Church Group shall be elected from its church-membership.

Item 3. They shall at this time make such suggestions or recommendations as they may have to make in the interest of improving the Larger Parish Work, and provide for their presentation at the annual meeting of the Council.

Section 2. *Upkeep of Property*—The individual Churches shall keep up their own property and attend to all matters affecting them individually and denominationally.

Article 7. THE TIME BASIS OF THIS EXPERIMENT—The work of the Parish shall be put on a three-year experimental basis with the hope that at the end of that time it shall have proven itself to such extent that it may be reorganized (if necessary) on a permanent basis, with the third worker mentioned above.

Article 8. AMENDMENTS—This constitution may be altered, amended, or enlarged at any meeting of the Council by a two-thirds vote of the members present, providing due notice in writing of the proposed alteration or amendment shall have been sent to each member not less than one month in advance.

IV

A Sample Constitution

The following was adopted as a general definition for the Larger Parish at the Bangor Summer School for Town and Country Ministers, June 8-19, 1931.

A definite area, preferably one forming a natural community, where the religious groups join in a common ministry with a representative governing council and a diversified service.

ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

Article I—Name

Section 1. The name of this organization shall be .....

Section 2. The delegated body, hereinafter provided for, shall be known as The Larger Parish Council.

Section 3. The administrative body, hereinafter provided for, shall be known as The Staff of the Larger Parish.

Article II—Purpose

The purpose of this Larger Parish shall be the undertaking of religious work that can be done better coöperatively than alone. The program shall include such coöperative projects as vacation church schools, week-day religious

education, evangelism, the training of Sunday-school teachers and officers, workers conferences, demonstrations, social and religious work for young people, and other such activities as may be recommended from time to time by the Larger Parish Council.

Article III—Membership

Section 1. All persons holding membership in the coöperating churches automatically become members of the Larger Parish.

Section 2. Any one who shall have lived in the parish for at least six months and shall have contributed of his time or money to the support of the Larger Parish program during that time, regardless of whether or not he is a member of any of the coöperating churches, may be considered a member of the organization, and therefore be permitted to vote and to hold office.

Section 3. Any of the coöperating churches may, at any time, refrain from coöperation on any project proposed by the Council or Staff.

Section 4. Any church may withdraw from the organization one year after having given written notice of its intention to the Council.

Section 5. The following churches are included in the area of this Larger Parish and shall become members as soon as their official bodies so vote and select their representatives in the Council .....

Other churches within the territory of the Larger Parish may unite whenever they approve this constitution and elect representatives to serve on the Council, but as soon as the churches take favorable action on this Larger Parish plan, their representatives may begin the coöperative program.

Article IV—The Council

Section 1. The Churches uniting in the work of the Larger Parish shall act through a Council which shall consist of the pastor and six delegates from each church who shall be chosen as follows:

First, the Superintendent of the Church School.

Second, the Superintendent of the Primary, and the Junior Departments of the Church School, to represent the children's work.

Third, the President of the Young People's Society, or where there is none, another young person between the ages of 15 and 25, to represent the young people.

Fourth, the President of the Ladies' Aid or Women's Missionary Society or other women's organization.

Fifth, the Chairman of the governing body of the Church (Trustee, Steward, Deacon, Elder, etc.).

Sixth, one member or "delegate at large," elected by the church for a period of two years, who shall not succeed himself.

Section 2. The officers of the Council shall be a Chairman, a Secretary, and a

Treasurer. The Chairman, who shall be a minister, shall be the official head of the Larger Parish, and the Chairman of both the Council and of the Staff.

Article V—The Staff

Section 1. The Staff shall be composed of the pastors of the coöperating churches, one of whom shall be the Chairman, and the denominational supervisors of the coöperating churches.

Section 2. The Staff shall be the administrative unit of the Larger Parish to promote and direct the various projects which the Council shall launch.

Section 3. The Staff may assign its members to various departments or committees for the efficient direction of the projects of the Larger Parish.

Section 4. Two directors of religious education shall be employed who shall be in charge of the coöperative work in religious education.

Article VI—Denominational Relations

Nothing in this agreement shall interfere with the relation of any coöperating church to its own denomination. The local church government, the benevolence program or any denominational practice shall not be changed by this coöperative arrangement.

Article VII—Meetings

Section 1. Regular meetings of the Council shall be held monthly, the time and place to be determined by the Council. A special meeting may be called by the Chairman upon the advice of the Staff or at the request of any church in the Larger Parish.

Section 2. The Staff and the committees shall meet at their own discretion or on the call of the Chairman.

Article VIII—Finance

Section 1. Each church shall continue to have charge of its own financial affairs as before.

Section 2. All moneys involved in projects which are promoted by the Council shall be handled by the Treasurer of the Larger Parish and all bills shall be ordered paid by the vote of the Council.

Section 3. It is expected that the salary and expenses of the special workers on the Larger Parish may be provided for among the following methods:

(a) The combining of two or more local churches under one pastor, thus releasing local church support and especially denominational missionary aid.

(b) Dues or contributions from a Parish-wide Religious Education Association composed of all parents whose children receive this special religious instruction.

(c) Appropriations from strong nearby city churches either as extra funds or as allocated or designated regular missionary gifts.
(d) Appropriations from the regular denominational Missionary agencies.

Article IX—Committees

Committees shall be organized as the program of the Larger Parish progresses and shall be composed of the representatives on the Council responsible in the local church for the work of the committee; for example: the Committee on Religious Education shall be composed of the Sunday-school Superintendent and the representative of the primary or junior department of each of the coöperating churches. The Committee on Young People's work shall be composed of the representative of the Young People's Society of each of the churches.

Article X—Amendments

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed at any meeting of the Council and voted upon at the next regular meeting and become effective if approved by two-thirds of those members present.

NOTE: The above Articles of Agreement are prepared in this form as the basis for discussion. The following procedure is suggested:

First, that they be corrected and revised by the denominational supervisors.
Second, that they be discussed by each of the churches mentioned herein.
Third, that the denominational supervisors, pastors and lay representatives of each of the churches come together and draw up a revised draft that will meet the approval of all concerned.
Fourth, that the superintendents and supervisors of the denominations represented in the churches that are to be included in the Larger Parish shall constitute a committee to be responsible for the initiation of the Larger Parish organization.

C

REPORT BY A DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION OF A LOOSELY INTEGRATED LARGER PARISH

Report of the Maryville Larger Parish (1929-1930)

By Nellie G. Wilson

The Maryville Larger Parish, organized two years ago, wishes to report some of the chief Parish activities of the past year and make a brief attempt at evaluation.

I. THE PARISH

All of the 22 Methodist churches in Blount County are coöperating in this enterprise. With the exception of two of these churches all are found in villages of less than 400 and in the open country. The total membership of about 2,400 is served by eight pastors of whom all, except one, live in the Parish. Sixteen of these churches are located in agricultural communities and six are in rural industrial centers. All of the churches except one have a Sunday school, and twelve churches provide another service, prayer meeting or an Epworth League, either on Sunday or a week night.

II. PARISH-WIDE ACTIVITIES

1. *Leadership Training*

During the year there have been two Standard Training Schools, a one-week school and a long-term one meeting two nights each week for three weeks. The latter was in coöperation with the M. E. Church, South. The schools reached ten Parish churches and enrolled 103 students, of whom 62 received credit. Although the enrollment was not as large as previous years, more students worked for credit.

Four Parish members were also enrolled in the Conference Summer School of Religious Education. The Parish paid the registration fee and provided transportation for these delegates.

2. *Age-group Activities*

This year the six Council members from each pastoral charge were selected in reference to their interest in certain age groups. These persons constituted the committee on children's work, young people's programs, and promotional work with adults. It was the plan of the Council that these committee members should be responsible for the various phases of the Parish program. Al-

though barely a beginning has been made the work accomplished thus far justifies the continuance of the plan.

(1) The Children's Work

Nine communities in the Parish had Vacation Church Schools this summer. This phase of the program began April 7 and closed August 12 with a Parish-wide sharing service and exhibit. These schools enrolled 402 credit students and 51 others who attended less than five days, making a total enrollment of 433. These boys and girls represented 12 Parish churches and 16 churches of other denominations. The Vacation Schools under the auspices of the Larger Parish were the only schools in the county this year.

The combined cost of all the schools was very small, being less than $50, an average cost per pupil of 12 cents. This minimum expense was possible only because of the fact that all of the schools were under one director, and materials not completely used by one school could be passed on to others. No single school could have been run for two weeks as cheaply as when it was a part of the Parish system.

All of the Vacation Schools shared in the World Friendship Treasure Chest project for the boys and girls in the Philippines. Four Treasure Chests, and four other boxes of the same size were filled with gifts made or purchased by the boys and girls with their own money. Some young people's and adult classes also shared in the project. These gifts and some posters and maps of Filipino scenes were displayed in one of the Maryville store windows one week-end. This served not only to inform others of the project, but also to increase interest in the whole Parish program.

There were over 65 young people and adults who gladly devoted two weeks of their time to teaching and assisting in the Vacation-school work. This opportunity for over 400 children to try to live the Jesus life together, for two weeks, under controlled conditions with sympathetic teachers, was surely worth all the time, effort and money expended.

(2) Young People's Work

Following the plan of last year there have been monthly Parish Young People's meetings. The young people themselves have taken the initiative in program building. The theme this year was "Youth and Christian Citizenship." In these programs there has been a very definite attempt to correlate the fellowship, worship and expressional activities.

In January a one-day Mid-winter Youth Institute was held. The 38 delegates represented every charge save one. Two quest groups were organized under the splendid leadership of Miss Eva Ploeger and Mrs. Josephine Lee Mehaffey.

Fifteen from the Parish attended the Holston Conference Epworth League Institute. A High-school Leadership class taught in the short-term Standard Training School, enrolled 12 young people.

(3) Promotional Work

The Council met in regular session once each quarter and formulated the Parish program. Problems arising between these sessions were cared for in the monthly meeting of the Executive Committee.

The pastors assisted each other in evangelistic work. Emphasis was also given World Service and Stewardship in dramatic programs and illustrated lectures.

(4) Publicity

Soon after the Parish was organized the Maryville Church offered one page of their bulletin for Parish use once each month. The value of having a paper devoted entirely to Parish news was soon recognized; therefore, beginning with October of this year, a four-page paper will be issued and mailed to every family in the Parish.

(5) Dramatic and Recreational Activities

In addition to the seasonal pageants and plays in the local churches, "The Lamp," a pageant of Religious Education, was presented as a Parish-wide project. The cast of 175 represented almost every church in the Parish. Each charge presented an episode which contributed to the general theme, so it was truly a sharing service. About 1,200 persons witnessed the presentation.

A group of Parish players also presented the rural play, "Bread," in four Parish centers.

On July 4, over 500 people attended the annual Parish picnic. One of the chief features of the day was an address by Dr. Polhamus, pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church, Knoxville, on the subject, "Thank God for Methodists."

(6) Parish Supplies

Six books were added to the Parish Library, making a total of 45 books for Parish use. Many costumes and supplies for dramatic work have been added, due to the local churches' interest in plays and pageants.

Through the generosity of the Reverend W. H. Ragan, a stereopticon and a collection of slides are also available for the Parish.

III. LOCAL CHURCH ACTIVITIES

The workers' conferences have proved to be the most effective means of meeting the needs of the local church school. The Director has met with six groups at least once each month, and rather closely supervised their programs of activities. Each of these groups are attempting to correlate their program of worship, instruction and expressional work.

The Primary Department in the Maryville Church is using the extended time schedule on Sunday morning and frequently finds it necessary to have

an additional session. The workers in this department are tabulating life situations as a basis for curriculum building.

Often the Director has had charge of the morning or evening church service and demonstrated methods or presented some phase of religious-education work. Some improvements have been made in gradation and in materials. Three schools have introduced the closely graded course in the Kindergarten groups. Several schools have added teacher enrichment magazines to their list of supplies. Very few of the churches have purchased any new equipment, but in many instances better methods of using present equipment were discovered. Often a rearrangement of furniture and pictures has worked wonders in the improvement of the program.

In many instances the Epworth League program has been enlarged to include all the young people of the church. Some of these groups have enriched their programs through an exchange of leaders. A Christian Quest League was organized in the local Church. One of the special responsibilities of these young people is to have charge of the Sunday night service once each month.

IV. SUMMARY

The response to the Parish program this year has been most gratifying. All of the 22 churches have participated in some phase of the work and made at least a small contribution to the Parish expense fund. The member churches seem to feel a responsibility for the entire group and realize that advance must be together. But lest we become self-satisfied, perhaps attention should be called to the fact that less than one-fourth of the entire Parish membership have been enrolled in the intensive programs of the Vacation Church Schools and the Standard Training Schools; and also that in our county, with a population of 34,000, there are 21,000 persons not included in the total constituency of the 89 churches representing 10 denominations. This certainly reveals a need for a coöperative effort on the part of all the churches to do the task for which they were organized. The Parish churches have responded to coöperative efforts, as evidenced in welcoming all the children of the community to the Vacation Schools, assisting in community religious services (Thanksgiving, Easter, etc.), joining in union Sunday evening services during the summer, and in evangelistic emphasis. The most effective coöperative efforts have been with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

In addition to the Parish work, the Director has taught in two other Standard Training Schools, a mid-winter institute, the Conference Summer School of Religious Education, and the Conference Epworth League Institute.

V. A WORD OF APPRECIATION

We wish to express our appreciation for the hearty coöperation on the part of all the pastors in the group, the District Superintendent, and the Conference Director of Religious Education. We desire to express our gratitude to the

Board of Home Missions and Church Extension and all the Parish Churches for making the program possible. We also wish to thank those who have made financial contributions; and others who have aided in special programs.

When we consider the relatively small amount of money contributed to the Maryville Larger Parish and the large number of persons benefited, we verily believe that even today when we are willing to share what we have in the Master's service, with His blessing, it will "feed the multitude."

D

THE COMMUNITY PARISH PLAN

Prepared by the Staff of the Inter-Seminary Commission for Training for the Rural Ministry

[The following description of the so-called "Larger Parish" was received after this volume was in the press. It is printed here by kind permission of the Inter-Seminary Commission for Training for the Rural Ministry. Its sponsors explain that it is a description rather than a definition of what they prefer to call the "Community Parish Plan." It is being sent out for general criticism and suggestion, after which it will be further revised. Readers of it are asked to send in their comments to Rev. Herman N. Morse, Chairman of the Staff of the Inter-Seminary Commission for Training for the Rural Ministry, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York City.]

How best can the Protestant Church provide a well-rounded, comprehensive ministry for all the people in rural America, both town and open country? The Community Parish Plan (often termed the "Larger Parish Plan") is proposed as an answer to this question. The necessity for a new approach to the problem of an adequate rural ministry arises from the following facts:

1. Generally speaking, the Protestant Church in its town and country work has never had a genuine parish plan, either in theory or in fact. This has been true, primarily, because church extension programs have been motivated by denominational and often competitive considerations. To a limited extent in the earlier colonies individual churches had definite responsibility for assigned community areas. Some churches, also, even to the present time, because maintained in communities with a high degree of social and religious (and often racial) solidarity, or because of comity agreements, have had clearly defined parish areas. As a rule, however, among country churches the parish has been an ecclesiastical and not a geographical or social concept. That is to say, the program of the church has been focused upon an ecclesiastical unit rather than a social unit; it has been church-centered rather than community-centered; its concern has been with a church constituency rather than with a community population.

2. Because of this primary point of view the unit of organization for religious work has characteristically been an individual local church. The administrative ideal has looked in the direction of self-supporting and locally self-sufficient, individual churches. Combinations of churches into circuits have been resorted to when local financial resources were insufficient. Such combinations have been effected usually without regard to social or community

considerations. Thus, two or more weak churches within a single community are often, without regard to each other, or to stronger churches in the same community, combined with weak churches in other communities.

3. This prevailing point of view and practice have made inevitable low standards of support and meager conceptions of program; have stimulated competition and discouraged coöperation; and have resulted in very many families and even whole neighborhoods being inadvertently excluded from the attentive concern of any church.

Community Parish Plan

The Community Parish Plan exactly reverses the ordinary procedure. It places its emphasis upon the serving of a population rather than upon the building up of a congregation. Instead of combining churches solely for the purpose of building up a minimum budget and without regard to community considerations, it combines them solely for the purpose of making possible a more effective service to a community. Its characteristic methods of organization and operation rest upon the following assumptions:

1. If the church is to take seriously its responsibility to provide a comprehensive Christian ministry for *all* the people living in the country its program must be organized primarily, not on the basis of ecclesiastical, denominational units, but on the basis of natural units of territory and population which in the aggregate will include the entire settled countryside. These natural units, the boundaries of which may be determined by physiographic, economic, or social factors, or by a combination of them, represent areas within each of which all the people are reasonably accessible and have common interests and associations. Such units should be outlined after careful study of all the pertinent factors in the situation.

2. Within each such natural unit all of the religious organizations and forces should be brought within the scope of one coördinated program. The controlling purpose of this program should be to reach all the people resident there with a ministry calculated to "win them to discipleship of Jesus Christ, to unite them with other disciples in the fellowship of the Christian Church, and to educate them for worship and service." The exact form of organization and content of program should be the result of united thinking and planning on the part of all the existing religious agencies which thus coöperate in the service of a "community parish."

3. Every person living within this community parish should become a part of the assigned responsibility, for enlistment, service and cultivation, of some unit of the coöperating organizations.

Method of Operation

Under the great variety of circumstances existing no single hard and fast method of operation is everywhere feasible. Plans must be dictated by local situations. Most cases, however, will fall within some one of the following categories and may be treated accordingly:

1. Where all existing churches are weak and are unable separately to provide adequate leadership, equipment, program, or financial support:

In such situations the only possible answer has usually been the circuit on a strictly denominational basis. This does not solve the problem but merely make possible its perpetuation. Under the Community Parish Plan all such churches would pool their resources in one united program which would provide for them jointly what no one of them could secure alone. If such a combination of resources is still insufficient to provide a reasonable level of support, it may be supplemented by denominational mission aid which, however, should be granted not to individual churches as such, but to the total community program.

2. Where there are a number of churches of which some at least are of considerable financial strength:

In such situations, which frequently have been highly competitive with disastrous results for the weaker outlying churches, a completely unified program is often not obtainable since it seems to involve some surrender of independence by churches which are strong enough to operate alone. A feasible method here may involve the formation of a Parish Council including all the ministers of the community and other representatives of all the churches. This Parish Council will—

(a) formulate a plan of religious work for the entire parish;
(b) provide for the coöperation of churches and ministers in projects of mutual interest;
(c) arrange for the employment for the service of all the churches and of the entire area of specialists in religious education, young people's work and similar fields.

3. Where there are a limited number of churches of approximately equal strength usually concentrated in the village and which, while strong enough to support separate programs of work, are unable individually to engage staff specialists, or otherwise to provide a fully-rounded service for the entire community:

In such situation the churches are often not prepared either for federation or for a formal parish organization on a completely unified basis. They should at least organize a Parish Council through which they might unitedly—

(a) study the needs of the entire area with a view to preventing duplication of effort or the overlooking of those who should be served or the neglect of needs which should be met;
(b) on the basis of some form of community survey assign each unchurched family to one of the coöperating churches for cultivation.
(c) undertake together united programs for the conduct of Vacation Bible Schools, week-day church schools, union services for evangelism or for the observance of special seasons, community-welfare projects and similar purposes;

(d) plan the extension of the parish boundaries to include any unserved or inadequately served contiguous areas and for coöperation with any churches within the outer boundaries of the community area.

THE COMMUNITY PARISH IDEAL

Ideally the Community Parish Plan, operating within a specific "area of inhabited land," works toward:

1. The delimitation of the territory which forms a logical and workable parish area and its coördination with all adjacent parish areas, so that the countryside is completely covered.

2. The formation of a Community Parish Council on which all churches in the area will be represented and through which all will coöperate.

3. The formulation and direction through the Parish Council of a comprehensive program of religious work for the entire population.

4. The preparation and raising of a joint budget for this united program of work.

5. The employment of a unified staff of workers sharing responsibility for the entire program and operating as a team, but qualified to provide out of their number specialized leadership in such fields as preaching and worship, religious education, social activities and ministry of music.

6. Developing in all the churches a conception of their mission which is community-centered and not church-centered, which is world-wide and not narrowly parochial, and which calls for the united, planned service of all the needs of all the people living within the area of the parish.

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